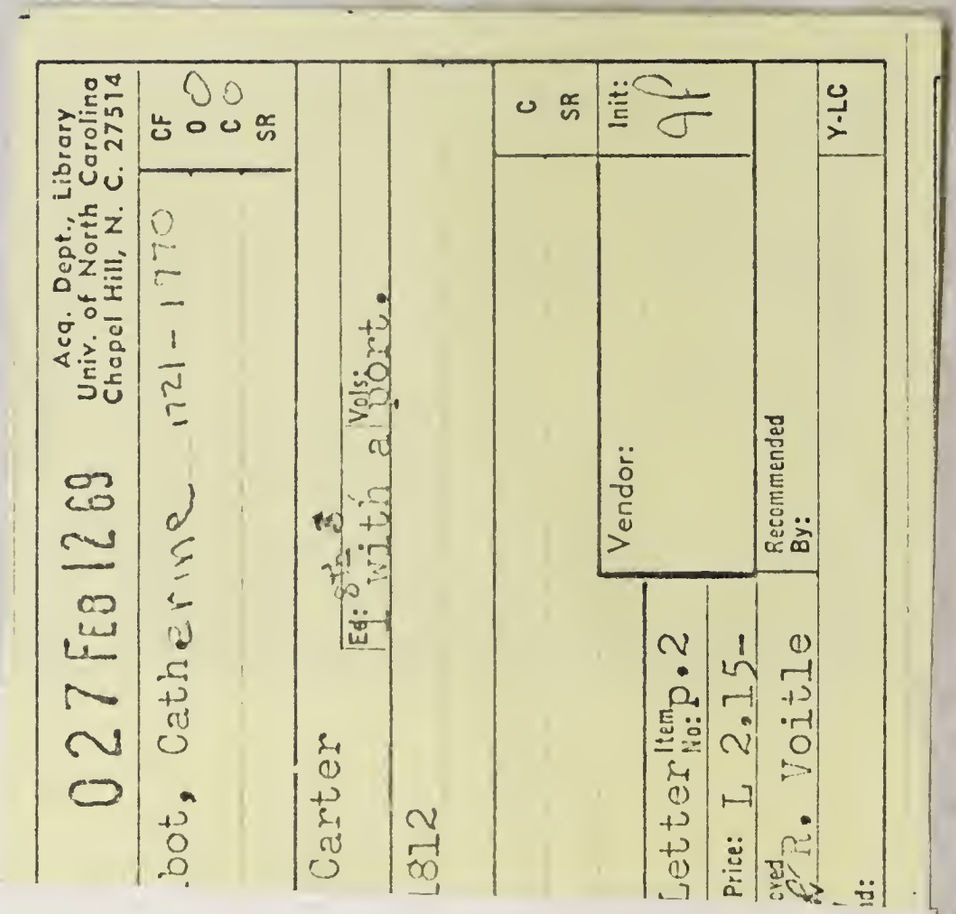
UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL
00014376481



THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

ENDOWED BY THE
DIALECTIC AND PHILANTHROPIC
SOCIETIES

PR3729
.T113
1812

Talbot! did e'er Mortality enshrine
A mind more generous, meek or kind than thine
Delightful moralist! thy well wrote Page
shall please, correct, & animate the age
Point out the road the thoughtless many miss
that leads thro' Virtue to the Realms of bliss,
fain would my Soul thy Sentiments imbibe
and fain thy Manners in my own transcribe
Genius & Wit were but thy second praise
thou knewest to win by still sublimer Ways
thy angel Goodness all who knew approv'd
honor'd admir'd applauded too & lov'd
Fair shall thy fame to latest ages bloom
and every Muse with Tears bedew thy Tomb.

El: Ross

Kilravoch 1813

Engraved by C.Heath.

CATHARINE TALBOT,

BORN MAY 1720 – DIED JANUARY 9, 1770.

From a Portrait in the poſſeſsion
of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Carter

Publiſhed June 8th 1812, by F.C. & J. Rivington.

PR 3729
.T13
1812

THE

WORKS

OF THE LATE

MISS CATHARINE TALBOT.

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

FIRST PUBLISHED BY THE LATE

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER;

AND NOW REPUBLISHED WITH SOME

FEW ADDITIONAL PAPERS:

TOGETHER WITH

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

AND SOME

ACCOUNT OF HER LIFE,

BY THE

REV. MONTAGU PENNINGTON, M.A.

NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR TO MRS. CARTER, VICAR OF NORTHBOURN IN KENT, AND AUTHOR OF "REDEMPTION, OR A VIEW OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION," *&c.*

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON,

NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;

By Law and Gilbert, St. John's-Square, Clerkenwell.

1812.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE EIGHTH EDITION.

SEVERAL persons having expressed an earnest desire to have a portrait of Miss Talbot prefixed to her works, the Editor is happy to have it now in his power to gratify them. He has accidentally found, since the publication of the last edition, a miniature of her which had escaped observation, in a little cabinet drawer belonging to the late Mrs. Carter; and from this, the engraving which accompanies the present edition was taken.

N.B. The purchasers of former editions may, if they please, be accommodated with prints of Miss Talbot, at 1s. 6d. each, by applying to the publishers.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

https://archive.org/details/worksoflatemissc00talb_0

PREFACE.

THE demand for this little volume having been so great as to make a new impression of it necessary, the Editor has been earnestly requested to prefix to it some account of the amiable and excellent Author. To this no reasonable objection could be made, but the want of any other materials than such as are already published, as contained in the Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, and the Series of Letters between her and Miss Talbot. But as some persons may purchase these Essays who are not in possession of those larger and more expensive works, it was thought that to collect from them for this edition, some of the most striking particulars of the Life of Miss Talbot could not be considered an improper repetition. The reader will, however, no doubt join with the present Editor, in lamenting that the task should have devolved on one so unable to perform it pro-

perly, instead of having been executed by her who first collected and arranged these scattered remains; who was acquainted with every particular of her friend's life; whose high esteem and warm affection would have engaged her heart in it: and whose abilities would have done ample justice to the subject.

What prevented Mrs. Carter from adding to her beloved friend's works, her own testimony to her character and her conduct through life; whether it was by the request of Mrs. Talbot who was then living, or whether such a desire had been expressed by the deceased lady, cannot now be known. Whatever the cause might be, it could have no operation beyond her life; and it seems to be fulfilling a duty to society, to shew that the virtues of her character were not inferior to the excellencies of her writings; that there was no discord between her conduct and her opinions; and that the strict attention to the duties of the Gospel which she so strongly recommended to others, was not less enforced and adorned by her own example.

SOME

ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE

OF

MRS. CATHARINE TALBOT.

CATHARINE TALBOT was born in the month of May, 1720. She was the only child, and born five months after her father's decease, of Edward Talbot, second son to William, Bishop of Salisbury, and afterwards of Durham, and younger brother to Charles, first Lord Talbot. Her mother was daughter to the Rev. George Martyn, Prebendary of Lincoln.

It does not appear that Mr. Edward Talbot was brought up to any profession, unless he was either in the Church, or designed for it; which an expression in the Bishop of London's Life of Archbiſhop Secker rather seems to intimate. If however this was the case, he had

certainly no considerable preferment; and dying so early, having only attained the age of twenty-nine years, and being a younger brother, he left his widow in a situation very inadequate to his rank in life. She had been married to him only a few months, and was left in a state of pregnancy. Happily for her the kind attentions of a dear and intimate friend were not wanting at that critical period. Catharine, sister to Mr. Benson, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, who had been the companion of her early youth, and whose brother was upon an equally intimate footing with Mr. Talbot, was residing with her at the time of his death. She was her great support in that heavy affliction, and when her infant was born, who came into the world with a very weak and delicate constitution, it was supposed that she could not have been reared without the assistance of her care and tenderness.

These endearing circumstances naturally formed a still closer bond of intimacy between the two ladies; and they continued to live together, and to bestow all their joint attention upon the infant Catharine. But before she was five years of age, this establishment was broken up by the marriage of Miss Benson to

Mr. Secker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, but then Rector of the valuable living of Houghton-le-Spring in Durham.

For this preferment however, and others still greater which followed it, Mr. Secker was indebted to the friendship of Mr. Edward Talbot, who on his death-bed had recommended him to his father the bishop. Mr. Secker's grateful heart was never unmindful of this obligation, which naturally induced him to pay great attention to his benefactor's widow and child.

When therefore he married Miss Benson from her house, he immediately joined his wife in the request that Mrs. and Miss Talbot would from that time become a part of his family. The offer was accepted, and they never afterwards separated; and upon Mrs. Secker's death, which took place in the year 1748, they still continued with him, and took the management of his domestic concerns.

There is reason to suppose that Mr. Secker paid considerable attention to Miss Talbot's education; for when she and her mother went to reside with him, she was under five years of age; and as Mr. Secker had no children, he

always treated her as his daughter, and took the same pride and pleasure in her dawning genius, as if she had in reality been such. From her mother it does not appear probable that she could acquire much either of literature or accomplishment; but to her she owed what was of much greater consequence, strictly religious and virtuous principles, so well grounded, and on a foundation so solid, that they were never afterwards shaken in any situation of life. For though Mrs. Talbot was not a woman of brilliant parts, and her own education seems to have been rather neglected, yet was her mind strong, her judgment sound, her manners amiable, and her piety fervent as well as rational.

But besides her mother's instructions, Miss Talbot enjoyed the benefit of a constant intercourse with the eminent Divine with whom they lived; and his enlightened mind soon discovered the extent of her early genius, and was delighted to assist in its improvement. Hence, although she never studied the learned languages, unless perhaps a little Latin, she reaped all the advantages of Mr. Secker's deep and extensive learning, of his accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, and of his critical and

unwearied research into the sciences and languages more immediately connected with that important study.

Yet though so much attention was bestowed on serious pursuits, the lighter and more ornamental parts of female education were not neglected. For the acquirement of these there was abundant opportunity in the different situations in which Mr. Secker's rapid progress in the Church placed him *. In 1727 he became a Prebendary of Durham, and for the two following years lived chiefly in that city. Not long after this, he was appointed King's Chaplain; and in 1733 became Rector of the Parish of St. James in Piccadilly; which preferment he held for upwards of seventeen years, during which he always resided for at least half the year in his parsonage house. In 1734 he was promoted to the Bishoprick of Bristol; to that of Oxford in 1737; to the Deanery of St. Paul's in 1750; and to the Archbishoprick of Canterbury in 1758.

* Several of these particulars, both relating to Archbishop Secker and to Mrs. and Miss Talbot, are taken from the Bishop of London's Life of that Prelate.

From the time therefore that Miss Talbot was seven years of age, she lived almost constantly in, or near, large cities; and was consequently enabled to acquire every useful branch of education, and all those elegant accomplishments which add so much grace to beauty and virtue. She learnt music, but without acquiring any considerable proficiency in it, or bestowing upon it much time; but she was extremely fond of Church music, and when Dr. Secker was Dean of St. Paul's, bestowed great attention upon the choir of that Cathedral *. In drawing, and painting in water-colours, she made a much greater progress; and as some of her Letters shew that her knowledge of these sciences was by no means superficial, so some of her performances, still remaining, prove that her execution would not have disgraced even a professional artist. She particularly excelled in painting flowers from nature, and in landscapes; of which some beautiful specimens are in her present Editor's possession.

* For the service of that Church she requested her friend Mrs. Carter to alter the Anthem, of "Lo, He comes with clouds descending;" the whole of which she composed, except the first stanza. See the Series of their Letters, 4to. p. 333, vol. 1.

While this attention was bestowed on Miss Talbot's accomplishments, it may readily be supposed that the sciences and modern languages were not neglected. She had a complete knowledge of French and Italian, and late in life she taught herself German, with a view at first of being merely able to read the "Death of Abel" in the original. She appears also to have had some small acquaintance with Latin; but of Greek she knew nothing, and often lamented her ignorance of that language, especially while her friend Mrs. Carter was engaged in the arduous task of translating Epictetus. She studied also Geography and Astronomy with much care and attention: and with respect to the latter of these sciences, she had the advantage of being instructed by Mr. Wright, an Astronomer of no small reputation at that time, and an ingenious though visionary man. He was also acquainted with Mrs. Carter, who was about three years older than Miss Talbot, and was already well known in the world. The high opinion which Mr. Wright entertained of both his young friends, naturally made him desirous that they should become acquainted; and the reputation which each of them was rapidly acquiring, was an inducement

also to them to unite in the same wish. For though Miss Talbot had published nothing, yet her character for piety, virtue, talents, and accomplishments, began already to attract notice, and to be held in very high and general estimation. For she was moving in a distinguished sphere of life; her noble birth, great connections, and residence in the family of so eminent a Prelate as Dr. Secker was, added great lustre to her merit, and set it off with every advantage. She was also admired for her personal charms, as may be seen by the verses addressed to her, which are inserted in the Preface to the Letters between her and Mrs. Carter, and she possessed all the graces of the most polished manners, and the most fascinating and winning address.

But, besides Mr. Wright, the ladies possessed a mutual friend in the Honourable Mrs. Rooke, daughter to John, Lord Ward, and widow of George Rooke, Esq. who resided in the old mansion-house of St. Laurence, near Canterbury. There she was occasionally visited by them both; but they never met till February, 1741, though they had once previously seen each other in St. James's church; a circum-

stance which, though trivial, they were accustomed to recollect with much pleasure, and to which sometimes they alluded in their Letters*.

From this time, as may be seen in their correspondence, an intimacy took place between the two ladies, which soon ripened into the most warm and intimate friendship; and this never decreased to the hour of Miss Talbot's death, nor was ever damped by the most trifling disagreement or estrangement whatsoever. The esteem as well as the affection were mutual; it was in the truest sense a religious friendship, and they strictly realized the beautiful idea of the Psalmist, which has afforded the motto to the collection of their Letters, they *took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends.*

But the warm affections of Miss Talbot's heart were not confined to Mrs. Carter only.

* Thus Mrs. Carter says, in one of her early Letters, 4to. vol. i. p. 9.

"Benedetto sia il giorno, e'l mese, e l anno
"E la stagione, e'l tempo, e'l hora, e'l punto;

and St. James's church and Mr. Wright, and the particles yes and no, and every other circumstance, and every other person that contributed to make me happy in the sight and conversation of Miss Talbot."

She possessed also the intimate friendship of several ladies equally distinguished by their rank and character. Among these, one of the first in both respects, was the celebrated Countess of Hertford, afterwards Duchess of Somerset, with whom she passed occasionally a good deal of her time, and kept up a constant correspondence; and she often speaks of her in her Letters to Mrs. Carter, in terms of the highest respect and regard. She was also on terms of particular intimacy with all the female branches of the family of Yorke; especially Marchioness Grey and Lady Anson. From this last-mentioned lady, however, some circumstances not explained in her Letters, occasioned a temporary alienation, or rather coolness. But before her death this had ceased, to the gratification of both parties, and Lord Anson constantly after that event shewed Miss Talbot the most marked and flattering attention.

At what age she began to compose does not appear; but certainly it was early in life, for her Poem on reading Hammond's Elegies, was written when she was not more than 22 years of age; and though it is by no means one of the best of them, it evidently shews a hand

which had been used to composition, and powers of mind which had been accustomed to exertion. It is much to be wished that Mrs. Carter had endeavoured to assign their proper dates to her different productions, which probably she could have done, but which it is in vain now to attempt. For no part of the Memoirs of genius is more interesting than that which shews the developement of mind; the opening and progress of imagination; and the difference of sentiment and opinion (if any such there be) in the various periods of life.

From this omission then, if it really was an omission and not unavoidable, it has happened that the Essays and other prose pieces as well as the Poems, do not follow each other in any chronological order, or regular arrangement. They appear to be exactly as Mrs. Carter took them out of what is frequently spoken of by both ladies in their Letters, under the name of *the Green-book;* a kind of common-place-book, in which Miss Talbot seems to have written both prose and verse, finished and unfinished, sketches and fragments; just as her health, spirits, and occupations permitted. For all Mrs. Carter's influence could never prevail

upon her friend either to arrange her papers properly, or to publish them herself; though it was what she earnestly desired, and had even succeeded so far as to obtain a promise * from her that she would endeavour to do.

But however sincerely Miss Talbot designed to perform that promise when she made it, ill health, and weakness of spirits its usual attendant, formed an insuperable bar to its completion. And when she grew better, the exercise necessary for her recovery, and the various engagements which her situation in life made in-

* "What shall I answer to your enquiries," says Miss Talbot in a Letter to Mrs. Carter, 4to. v. i. 344, "about the green book? I have remembered my promise faithfully, but am just as far from performing it as I was last year. I have read it carefully, but can find no order, no connection in it. It wants an introduction—so it is returned to the *considering drawer* with many of its ancestors.—The other papers, yours and all, lie in the same hopeless condition. But if I gain great strength, spirits, courage and diligence in this happy retreat *(Percy Lodge)* from every care and every interruption, you may possibly hear a better account of me and them." To this Mrs. Carter replies by complaining of "the vexatious neglect of my favourite point the green book: but it is really intolerable of you not to let the world be somewhat the better for you."

dispensable, occupied too much time to allow her to correct and arrange her papers.

Add to this her domestic employments in the care of a large establishment, and her constant personal attention to the neighbouring poor both in town and country, and it will excite but little surprize that she should so frequently complain, when in health, of want of time.

Unfortunately indeed this was not very often the case, for the seeds of the fatal malady which at last conducted her to the tomb, seem to have been very early planted in her constitution. Hence probably proceeded the listlessness and languor which oppressed her so cruelly, even when she had no formed complaint; and hence also the disorder which was mistaken for consumption, and for which Mrs. Carter accompanied her to Bristol, about ten years before her death. Her stay there appeared to have the desired effect, but she never recovered her health; and from that time, when she was about 40 years of age; when perhaps the powers of the mind and the soundness of the judgment are at their height, she became a confirmed ivalid.

These circumstances may account for her having written so little, considering her love of study, the desire of being useful to the world, and the quickness of her parts. For composition seems in her to have been attended with little labour; her thoughts flowed as fast as her pen could write, and there are probably not many instances of a style so chaste and easy, and obviously formed with so little care and study. The correctness of her language, the strength of her arguments, and the justness of her reasoning, are equally the objects of admiration; and these are set off by a vividness of fancy, and glow of imagination, which seem to be the peculiar property of a poetic genius. And such in truth was her's; for many of the images, illustrations, and similes, even in her gravest prose writings, are really poetry, and require nothing but the mechanical aid of rhyme and arrangement to make them such also in appearance *.

Indeed the world has been sufficiently inclined to do justice to Miss Talbot's talents:

* See for examples of this assertion, among many others, the close of Essays ix. xiii. xviii. xxii. and xxvi; the passage in Essay v. concerning the *Historical Glass*; several in the Pastorals; and the Third Imitation of Ossian.

and few books of more moral and religious instruction have had a greater sale, and gone through more editions than the little posthumous volume of her miscellaneous works. Of the "Reflections on the Days of the Week," published separately, upwards of twenty-five thousand copies have been sold, and of the collection of her works, the present is the seventh edition. This is a circumstance not less creditable to the age, than it is to the Author; and it also proves the correctness of her friend's judgment into whose hands they were put by Mrs. Talbot. She published them upon her own account and at her own hazard. "I do not believe*," says she, in a Letter to Mrs. Talbot, "that I shall be a loser: and I have a better opinion both of the sense and virtue of the world, than to think it in the least degree probable, but that such a work will meet with the approbation it so justly deserves." The event shewed that she was right; and the excellence of her motives for wishing them to be published, appears very evident from the following paragraph in another Letter to Mrs. Talbot. "I imagine by this time a good part of a third Edition *(of the Reflections on the*

* See Mrs. Carter's Memoirs, 4to. p. 281, 1st. edit.

Days of the Week) is sold off. What a comfort it is to think on the diffusive good which that dear angel has communicated to the world, of which she is now enjoying the reward! What a blessed change to herself from the suffering state of the last sad year!" This was written in December, 1770, when Miss Talbot had not been dead more than eleven months.

But this excellent as well as amiable young woman ought not to be considered by posterity merely as an author. Great as her talents, and brilliant as her accomplishments were, she possessed qualities of infinitely more importance both to herself and society. Her piety was regular, constant, fervent, but not enthusiastic. It was the spring of all her actions, as its reward was the object of all her hopes. Her charity, including the whole meaning of the word in its apostolical sense, was extended to all her acquaintance, rich as well as poor; and to the latter she gave, not only such relief as her circumstances would allow (for she was never rich) but what was infinitely more valuable to her, no small portion of her time.

It is impossible to read her Letters, especially those from Cuddesden, without perceiving

how much of that precious time, of which she so bitterly lamented the want, she bestowed on the necessities of her poor neighbours. She examined, instructed, and rewarded the children; she gave her advice to all who wished for it, and from those who were in want of pecuniary assistance her liberality was never withheld. In this last respect there is reason to believe that she was often Dr. Secker's almoner: for there can be no doubt that he, who when he became Archbishop of Canterbury, constantly bestowed in charity upwards of two thousand pounds a year*, had been equally bountiful before in proportion to his income.

Highly accomplished, and admired as Miss Talbot was in her youth, it does not appear that she ever turned her thoughts to matrimony. If she had, circumstanced as she was, opportunities for her forming an advantageous and honourable connection could not have been wanting. Her birth and situation in life, the

* This is a fact which the Editor has frequently heard from the late Mrs. Carter. It is also cofirmed by the testimony of the present Bishop of London, who was then his Chaplain, in his "Review of the Life and Character of Archbishop Secker."

sweetness of her manners, and the reputation of her talents, made her the object of general attention and admiration wherever she went. Yet there is no reason to believe that she ever had any wish or intention of entering into that state, or had ever formed any such attachment as to induce her to desire it. At least this appears certainly to have been the case after her acquaintance with Mrs. Carter commenced, which was in her 21st year; though there is in one of her Letters a dark hint, as if previously to that time there had once been a scheme of that nature in agitation. And this, from the manner in which it is alluded to, seems rather to have been contrary to her own wishes, and to have been given up in compliance with them. Her health, as has been observed before, was always delicate, and early in life even became infirm; and there are passages in her Letters to Mrs. Carter, which may imply that she had very soon formed a resolution against marriage. But if this was the case, she was too prudent, and had too much good sense ever to avow it publickly.

Miss Talbot's studies were very general and desultory: this was probably occasioned by

the state of her health, which was such as often to oblige her to read for mere amusement. But her opinions were invariably formed upon the best and truest principles, those of the Gospel. Hence her judgment, whenever morality was concerned, seldom if ever erred. Possibly in the case of Mrs. Carter's Translation of Epictus *; her fears or her scruples may appear to some to have been needless, or to have been carried too far. But if this was the case, it was at least an error on the safe side. It could do no harm; it might be, and indeed it actually was, productive of good; for to it was owing the Introduction and Notes with which Mrs. Carter enriched that translation. With respect to other books, the passages in her Letters which relate to the Rambler, the Adventurer, and Sir Charles Grandison will probably be read with considerable interest. She was very anxious for their success, and particularly desirous that the moral parts and narratives in them should be such as might improve as well as delight the age. For this purpose it appears by the Letters that both she and Mrs. Carter lent their assistance to the

* See Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, 4to. p. 109, &c. 1st. edit.

two last-mentioned Works by various hints, and plans, as well of characters as of stories. For both ladies were upon intimate terms of acquaintance with the amiable and respectable author of Sir Charles Grandison, and with some of the gentlemen who wrote occasionally in the Adventurer: in particular it appears from a Letter of Mrs. Carter*, that Miss Talbot had revised and corrected Sir Charles Grandison before it was printed; a task, it might be supposed, too long and tedious for her weak health, and fully-employed time.

Miss Talbot's Life affords little scope for narrative: it passed on in a smooth equable tenor, without dangers or adventures; and equally exempt upon the whole from any remarkable instances of good or bad fortune. This was a blessing of which her pious mind was deeply sensible; and like her friend Mrs. Carter, she was always "thankful for days not marked by calamity, nor blackened by the horrors of guilt." She was never separated for any long time from her friend, and indeed second father†, Archbishop Secker. In

* See p. 342, vol. i. 4to. of the Series of Letters.

† It may be proper here just to notice an idle and absurd report raised after her own and the Archbishop's

his various removals to and from his different preferments, she and her mother always accompanied him, and they had no other home but his. While he resided as Bishop of Oxford at Cuddesden, they entered into all the society of that neighbourhood; and when they lived in London they had there a large and very respectable acquaintance, and many friends. The deaths of some of these were almost the only misfortunes, her want of health excepted, which Miss Talbot ever experienced. The first of them was the decease of Mrs. Secker, which took place in the year 1748. She was her mother's dear and intimate friend, and they had lived together for several years before her marriage with the Archbishop, then Mrs. Secker, took place. To her care, in her mother's deep distress for the loss of her husband and the long illness which followed it, Miss Talbot had probably been indebted for the preservation of her infant life, and certainly for a long series

decease, that they had been privately married. Had this been the case, it could hardly have been kept secret in that large family; but all their most intimate friends are fully persuaded that there was not the smallest foundation for such an idea; and that neither of them ever thought of standing in any other relation to each other but that of father and daughter.

of maternal kindness and attention afterwards. And how deep an impression these had made upon her affectionate heart, appears from the Letter which she wrote to Mrs. Carter upon the death of Bishop Benson, Mrs. Secker's brother, about four years afterwards. "Once before" says she, "your company was a great relief to me in a melancholy time. I had then just lost the dearest and best of friends, the excellent sister of this last departed saint*. You know her not, and I could not talk of her with you: of him we might talk by the hour; for who that ever saw him as you have done, could ever be weary of the pleasing subject? Pleasing it is to know by one's own happy experience, that there are such beings in human nature, such amiable and benevolent spirits, so fitted for a higher state of existence." When Miss Talbot lost this dear friend, she was about twenty-eight years age.

A few weeks only before the death of the Bishop of Gloucester, the event so feelingly re-

* Whoever knows any thing of the character of that excellent man, will not think this epithet improperly applied. This Letter is printed in the Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, 4to. p. 89, 1st. edition, and the character is there by mistake referred to Bishop Butler; which error is corrected in the second edition.

ferred to in the preceding extract, Dr. Butler Bishop of Durham, the celebrated Author of the "Analogy*," also died. In him Miss Talbot lost one of her earliest and most respected friends. "He was," says she in a Letter to Mrs. Carter †, "my father's friend. I could almost say my remembrance of him goes back some years before I was born; from the lively imagery which the conversations I used to hear in my earliest years have imprinted on my mind. But from the first of my real remembrance, I have ever known in him the kind affectionate friend, the faithful adviser, which he would condescend to when I was quite a child, and the most delightful companion, from a delicacy of thinking, an extreme politeness, a vast knowledge of the world, and a something

* The "Analogy of Religion to Nature," perhaps the most clear, convincing, and powerful chain of argument of the necessity, propriety, and actual existence of revealed religion, ever offered to the world. The absence of all fanciful and unsupported theory, the precision with which its *data*, or first principles, are defined, and the perfect fairness with which every proposition is examined in that admirable work, make it a treasure to every man who wishes to give *a reason of the hope that is in* him. For it proves how well and advantageously reason may be applied to the service of religion.

† See Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, 4to. p. 87, 1st edition.

peculiar, to be met with in nobody else. And all this in a man whose sanctity of manners, and sublimity of genius, gave him one of the first ranks among men."

But Miss Talbot lived to experience a still severer affliction, though she did not long survive it, in the death of Archbishop Secker. This event, which took place in July, 1768, was extremely distressing upon many accounts both to her and her mother. They lost the sincere and affectionate friend, with whom they had now resided for forty-three years, without the most trifling disagreement, or the least diminution of kindness. They had to seek another home, when the advanced age of the mother, and the ill health of the daughter, made the necessity of exertion painful and distressing, and rendered them but little able to struggle with the world. For to increase their sorrows upon this melancholy occasion, even the fear of comparative poverty was not wanting. The Archbishop's will was not found till three months after his decease, and they had the propect of quitting the large establishment and the affluence of Lambeth Palace, for a precarious state of dependance on a relation,

or the occupation of a house to themselves on the smallest scale.

Yet still the balm of religious consolation was theirs; and in patient submission to the will of God, they found both relief and reward. The language of Miss Talbot to her friend was this*; "In so great a calamity it will somewhat comfort you to hear that my mother and I are well; composed and resigned." And again a few days after, "Circumstances of the greatest distress have been mixed with our heavy affliction, and I more than ever see cause for thankfulness to an over-ruling Providence. God be thanked, our minds are supported in comfort, and our healths wonderfully preserved."

But this circumstance, which caused them so much uneasiness at the time, was productive of the great advantage of enabling them to know their real friends. These were many, and highly respectable; nor indeed does it appear, and for the credit of the world it ought to be mentioned, that any of those persons who had lived on terms of intimacy with them in their

* See Correspondence, 4to. vol. ii. p. 57.

prosperity, deserted them in their apparent adversity. Mrs. Carter went to them immediately, and remained with them till they removed from Lambeth, and was, as Miss Talbot says, "a balm and cordial" to their spirits. All the Archbishop's particular friends vied with each other in attention to them; and a younger brother of Mrs. Talbot's husband, Mr. Talbot of Chart, near Dorking, took them to his own house, as soon as they could leave the Palace, and treated them with every mark of affection and regard. While they were there, the long sought-for will was found, and they became entitled under it, for their lives jointly and separately, to the interest of thirteen thousand pounds in the three per cent annuities.

The bequest, which added to their small fortune, near four hundred pounds a year, a much better income in those days than it would now appear to be, enabled Mrs. Talbot to take a comfortable and convenient house in Grosvenor Street. To this they removed in the December following; and here they remained till the end of June, when Miss Talbot's increasing complaints obliged them to leave London for a cooler and better air. Their kind and constant friend, the late Marchioness Grey, lent them for this

purpose her house at Richmond, together with "every thing she could think of to contribute to their comfort or amusement," and at the same time recommended them to all her intimate acquaintance in that neighbourhood.

From this delightful retreat Miss Talbot only returned in time to breathe her last in her mother's house in town. She was with great difficulty conveyed thither from Richmond in November, and though she thought herself better for the first few days, she was never afterwards able to quit her own apartment. Her chief disorder, but added to a very weak and now completely worn-out constitution, was a cancer.

This fatal complaint, which had now for three years been preying upon her enfeebled frame, had been kept a profound secret from all her friends, except the Archbishop, Mrs. Carter, her own maid, and her medical attendants. From motives of kindness to her mother, it had been concealed even from her, till a few weeks only before her death. The Letters which relate to her last illness are added to the close of the Correspondence between her and Mrs. Carter, and are therefore not repeated here. Her dissolution took place on the 9th day of

January, 1770, in the 49th year of her age, and was not attended by severe pain, or any peculiarly distressing circumstances. To her, like the Apostles, *to die* was *gain*. Her whole life had been a preparation for death; and her last hours were therefore not likely to be disturbed by the horrors of a wounded conscience, or the agonies of mental disquietude. On the contrary this is the account given of her by a lady* who was with her when her death was hourly expected. "Her resignation and patience through all her sufferings you are well acquainted with; it exceeds all description; cheerfulness does not express her countenance or manner, (I mean on Sunday last) there was a joy I never shall forget, and founded, I am certain, on the very few hours she hoped to remain here; and she told me she had that feel within her, that spoke her happiness near. —I am thankful I have known her, and have sometimes hopes I may be the better all my life, for some conversations passed in this last illness."

Mrs. Carter had the comfort of passing a few days with her beloved friend, before her

* Miss Jeffreys to Mrs. Carter; Letters, 4to. vol. ii. p. 75.

death dissolved that close and endearing intimacy, founded in the most perfect esteem, which had now existed almost thirty years between them. The account which she gives of this afflicting event, and the short but comprehensive character which she adds of Miss Talbot, in a Letter to Mrs. Vesey, is so superior to any thing which the Author of this slight sketch could say upon the subject, that he hopes he shall be pardoned for adding an extract from it, as the conclusion of this Memoir, although it has been published before.

" Two or three days before her death she was seized with a sudden hoarseness and cough, which seemed the effect of a cold, and from which bleeding relieved her; but there remained an oppression from phlegm which was extremely troublesome to her. On the ninth *(of January)* this symptom increased, and she appeared heavy and sleepy, which was attributed to an opiate the night before. I staid with her till she went to bed, with an intention of going afterwards into her room, but was told she was asleep. I went away about nine, and in less than an hour afterwards she waked; and after the struggle of scarcely a minute, it pleased God to remove her spotless soul from its mortal sufferings to that heaven for

which her whole life had been an uninterrupted preparation. Never surely was there a more perfect pattern of evangelical goodness, decorated by all the ornaments of a highly improved understanding, and recommended by a sweetness of temper, and an elegance and politeness of manners, of a peculiar and more engaging kind than in any other character I ever knew.—Little alas! infinitely too little have I yet profited by the blessing of such an example. God grant that her memory, which I hope will ever survive in my heart may produce a happier effect.

" Adieu, my dear friend, God bless you, and conduct us both to that happy assembly, where *the spirits of* the *just* shall dread no future separation! And may we both remember that awful truth, that we can hope to *die the death of the righteous* only by resembling their lives."

Mrs. Talbot, although she was then upwards of eighty years of age, bore the loss of her daughter with the most pious fortitude and resignation. She died in her ninety-third year of a paralytic attack, and was able to continue her Correspondence with Mrs. Carter till within a very few weeks of her death.

REFLECTIONS

ON

SUNDAY.

The Omnipresence of God, and the practical Inferences from it.

"O LORD, thou hast searched me "out, and known me: thou knowest "my down-sitting and mine up-rising: "thou art about my path and about my "bed, and spiest out all my ways."

How true, how astonishing is this thought! Almighty God, my Maker, is ever present with me. He is infinite in being, and therefore must be every where. He is infinite in knowledge, and therefore every thing must be known to Him. No

creature is too inconsiderable for his notice, who is the Maker of all, and "careth "for all alike." The friends, the relations, and acquaintance, whom I see and converse with every day, know not half so much of my conduct as He does, nor are half so attentive to it. How hourly careful should I be, then, to approve myself to Him! Among my relations and friends there are some whom I regard more than the rest, either out of greater affection for their goodness and kindness; or out of reverence for their greater wisdom and dignity; or out of interest, as being capable of doing me more good or hurt. All these motives of the highest regard are joined in Him. His excellence is more than thought can conceive: whatever is beautiful, or good, or amiable in the world, flows from Him as its source. In Him is all greatness and majesty, all wisdom and knowledge: every thing that is glorious, awful, venerable. My hourly dependence is upon Him, and all my expectations through an eternity to come. From Him

I have received my life, my being, every power and faculty of soul and body. Every innocent delight I enjoy, is His gift: in every danger, He is my present help. No power but His could guide me safely through the intricate mazes of life. Hitherto His providence has carefully watched over me, and His right hand has held me up: and through all my future life, He, who is truth itself, has promised never to fail me nor forsake me, if, on my part, I will but serve Him faithfully, as in my baptismal vow I have promised to do. That blessed covenant I am going to renew, by partaking of the holy Sacrament. Had not our blessed Saviour died to redeem mankind, we must all have appeared before an all-seeing God, of infinite justice and holiness, without security of being considered otherwise than as objects of displeasure. But we know, that He looks upon us now as objects of the tenderest mercy. He invites us to "pour out our "hearts before Him," at all times: "to "call upon Him in the time of trouble:"

" to look unto Him, and be saved." O my soul, in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

Let me then ask myself, as in His sight, what is the general turn of my temper, and disposition of my mind? My most trifling words and actions are observed by Him: and every thought is naked to His eye. Could I suppose the king or any the greatest person I have any knowledge of, were within reach of observing my common daily behaviour, though unseen by me, should I not be very particularly careful to preserve it, in every respect, decent and becoming? Should I allow myself in any little froward humours? Should I not be ashamed to appear peevish and ill-natured? Should I use so much as one harsh or unhandsome expression even to my equal, or my meanest inferior, even were I ever so much provoked? Much less should I behave irreverently to my parents or superiors. This awful Being, in whom I live and move, and from whom no obscurity can hide me, by whom the

very hairs of my head are all numbered, He knows the obligations of every relation in life. He sees in their full light the reciprocal duties of parents and children, of husbands and wives, of neighbours and fellow-servants. He knows the aggravated guilt of every offence against these ties of society, however we may be disposed to treat them as trifles: and every piece of stubbornness and pride, of ill humour and passion, of anger and resentment, of sullenness and perverseness, exposes us to His just indignation.

MONDAY.

The Improvement of Time, and Self-examination.

"BLESSED are they that do hun-
"ger and thirst after righteousness."—
Our Lord and Saviour has pronounced this blessedness, and through his grace, I hope to partake of it. Hunger and thirst naturally prompt us to seek, without delay, the means of satisfying them. What then is the food of the mind? Wholesome instruction and religious meditation. If then I sincerely do hunger and thirst after righteousness, I shall be frequently feeding my mind with pious books and thoughts. I shall make the returns of these meals as regular as I can, and seldom shall I find any necessity strong enough to make me miss them a whole day together.—But then it ought to be remembered too, that even these, the best

hours of my life, ought never to encroach upon the duties and employments of my station, whatever they may be. Am I in a superior station of life? My duty then probably takes in a large compass: and I am accountable to my Maker for all those talents entrusted with me by Him, for the benefit of my fellow-creatures. I must not think of living to myself alone, or devoting that time to imitate the employment of angels, which was given me for the service of men *. Religion must be my chief end, and my best delight: it must regulate all I think, or do; but whatever my station is, I must fulfil all its duties. Have I leisure and genius? I must give a due portion of my time to the elegant improvements of life: to the study of those sciences that are an ornament to human nature: to such things as may make me amiable, and engaging to all whom I

* How much is it to be wished that those whose disposition is inclined towards enthusiasm, would consider this admirable sketch of religious employment!

converse with, that by any means * I may win them over to religion and goodness. For if I am always shut up in my closet, and spend my time in nothing but exercises of devotion, I shall be looked upon as morose and hypocritical, and be disregarded as useless in the world. When this life is ended, we have a whole eternity before us to spend in those noblest employments, and highest delights. But man, in this low state of mortality, pays the most acceptable obedience to God, by serving his fellow-creatures.

Perhaps all these considerations are wide from my case. So far from having leisure upon my hands, I have scarce a moment free from the necessary engagements of business and bodily labour. While I am working hard for bread for myself and my family, or attending diligently the commands of a strict master, to whom I am justly accountable for every hour I have,

* *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

how can I find frequent opportunities for studying the Word of God, or much time to spend in devout meditation? Why, happily, much is not required, provided I make the best use of what little I have. Some time I must needs have on Sundays, and this I may improve. I may diligently attend to what I hear at church: I may examine whether my own practice is conformable to what I am there taught: and I may spend some hours in that day, either in good discourse, with such as are able to instruct me, or in reading such religious books as are put into my hands. Still enough will be left for chearful conversation, and pleasant walks. Why should either of them be the less chearful, for a mixture of religious thoughts? What indeed is there so gladdening as they are? Be my state ever so mean and toilsome, as a Christian, if indeed I behave like one, I am equal to the greatest monarch upon earth. Be my misfortunes and sorrows never so severe, as a Christian, I can look beyond death to an eternity of happiness,

of happiness certain, and unspeakable. These thoughts, therefore, I should keep upon my mind, through the whole week: they should be the amusement of my labour, and the relief of my weariness: and when my heart is thus ready, I shall gladly take every opportunity to sing and give praise. I shall awake early to worship that God, who is my defence and my delight; and I shall close every evening with prayer and thanksgiving to Him, whose "ways are ways of pleasantness, "and all whose paths are peace." Whenever I can have a quarter of an hour to spare from the necessary business, and the (at fit times) as necessary relaxations of life, which, while they are innocent, moderate, and reasonable, will never be disapproved by that good God, who has created every thing that is comely and pleasant in the world, and invites us to rejoice, and do good, all the days of our life: when I have any spare time, I shall gladly spend it in reading, with reverence and attention, some portions of the Bible. In

all my common conversation, I shall have my eye continually up to Him, who alone can direct my paths to happiness and improvement, and crown all my endeavours with the best success. I shall try to be something the better for every scene of life I am engaged in: to be something the wiser for every day's conversation and experience. And let me not fear, but that if I daily thus faithfully strive to grow in holiness and goodness, be my growth at the present never so imperceptible, I "shall in due time arrive at the measure "of the fulness of stature in Christ."

That I may be better for the last twenty-four hours, let me examine a little what temper I have been in all that time. In general, perhaps, I can recollect nothing much amiss in it: but let me descend to particulars. Things are often very faulty, that appear at first sight very trifling. Perhaps I have so fond a conceit of myself, as to think, that I can never be in the wrong. Has any uneasiness happened in the family this last day? Perhaps I

think the fault was wholly in others, and the right entirely on my side. But ought I not to remember, that in all disputes, there is generally some fault on both sides? Perhaps they begun:—but did not I carry it on?—They gave the provocation:—but did not I take it?—Am not I too apt to imagine, that it would be mean entirely to let a quarrel drop, when I have a fair opportunity to reason, and argue, and reproach, to vindicate my injured merit, and assert my right? Yet, is this agreeable to the precepts and example of Him, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not "again?" Is it agreeable to His commands, who has charged me, if my brother trespass against me, to forgive him, not seven times only, but seventy times seven? Is it agreeable to that Christian doctrine, which exhorts us, not to think of ourselves highly, but soberly, as we ought to think: and that in lowliness of mind, every one should think others better than himself? And alas, how often do I think this disrespect, though a slight one,

provoking to *me?* This situation, though a happy one, not good enough for *me?* How often have I had in my mouth that wise maxim, that a worm, if it is trod upon, will turn again! Wretch that I am, shall I plead the example of a vile worm of the earth for disobeying the commands of my Saviour, with whom I hope hereafter to sit in heavenly places *?

* It is proper to observe, that this excellent illustration of these unchristian passions, though expressed in the first person, conveys no sort of idea of the mild and humble disposition of the writer herself.

TUESDAY.

The Duty of constant Employment.

"I MUST work the work of Him who "sent me, while it is day."—If our blessed Saviour, infinitely great and excellent, was, when he assumed human nature, so far from being exempted from the general law of nature imposed on our first father and all his race, who is there amongst men, that shall plead an exemption? The duty of employment is twofold. First, as we are active and spiritual beings, ill would it become us to sit wrapt in indolence, and sleep away an useless life. Constant activity, and extensive usefulness, is the perfection of a spiritual Being. The great God himself is infinitely active. "My Father worketh hi-"therto, (saith our Saviour,) and I work." In their various degrees, all the orders of angels are "ministering spirits." In the

happy worlds above, all is life and activity. And shall man, who is so fond of life, lose his little portion of it in a lazy, slothful, half state? Shall he quench those sparks of immortality, that glow in his bosom, and content himself with being, for three parts of his time, little better than a lump of organized clay? Innocent man in Paradise, was not made for idleness. But guilty fallen man is peculiarly born to labour, and to trouble. Equally just and merciful was the doom pronounced to *Adam*; "in the sweat of thy face thou "shalt eat bread." Human nature, corrupted and depraved by the fall of our first parents, would be incapable of employing ease and leisure to any happy purposes. Greatly do we need constant employment to keep us out of the reach of those temptations from within, and from without, that in idleness particularly assault us. Greatly do we need to have much of our minds taken up with perpetual attention to necessary business, and hourly duty, that they may not prey too much

upon themselves. Labour and pain are the necessary, though unpalatable, medicine of our souls. Shall we refuse to follow the prescription of that heavenly Physician, who drank the bitterest cup for us? Toil and trouble are the just punishments of guilty human nature: shall we rebel against our awful Judge? Activity and employment are the law of our Being: and shall we not obey our sovereign Ruler, our great and good Creator?

What then is my proper business and employment, that I may set diligently to it? In most stations of life, this is too evident to be asked. And it is equally certain, that every station, even the very highest, has its proper work and labour, which whoever performs not to the utmost of their power, is a wicked and slothful servant, for we have all a Master in Heaven.

Come, then, my heart, let us chearfully set about our business. Be it study and improvement of the mind, toil of the body, or industry of the hands: be it care of our

families and domestic affairs: be it care of the public, and distribution of justice: be it care of our neighbours, and charity to the poor: be it education of children, instruction of the ignorant, attendance on the sick, culture of the ground, defence of our country: whatever it be, let us do it diligently and heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men. As subjects, children, servants, let us obey our rulers, parents, masters. And if it be the will of providence to disable us, for the present, from all active service, by confining us in chambers of sickness, in a weak and useless state, let us set the example of an uncomplaining submission, and chearful resignation: and let patience, at least, "have its perfect work."

This submissive, this humble, this obedient disposition, is poverty of spirit. We ought to think nothing beneath us; nor to desire any thing but what is allotted to us. We ought to imagine nothing our own, and surely therefore not our time: yet how apt we are to think it quite a hardship put

upon us, if any small portion of it is to be spent disagreeably, and if we have not hours, and days, and years, to indulge in careless idleness and giddy pleasure.

Among other works, that of reforming my temper is surely a most necessary one. Let me therefore take myself a little to task. How have I behaved the last day?

I have not, perhaps, been positively out of humour: but have I guarded my disposition against every failing? Have I not indulged a nice fancy, in taking some disgust at any of those that I converse with; which, trifling as it seems at present, may, in time, quite alienate our minds from one another? A disagreeable look, or manner, too often gives a prejudice against persons, who are really deserving. —Let me be upon my guard against such prejudices. Let me overlook all trifling infirmities in others: but let me spare them the pain and difficulty of having many such to overlook in me. Let me observe in every thing a perfect cleanliness and neatness; for nothing is so dis-

gustful as the contrary. Let me be mild and civil, moderate and discreet in all my ways of speaking: let my behaviour always be easy and obliging, natural and unaffected. Let me always preserve, as much as I can, even under severe trials, a chearful pleasing countenance: and, among other things, let me try to avoid, as much as possible, falling into those little foolish tricks and peculiarities, which every body is so apt to acquire, without even perceiving it. I cannot help seeing in others, how disagreeable they are, though in them, I ought as little as possible to attend to it. But let me watch myself a little, and discover, in order to reform whatever I may have in me, that makes me less agreeable, and therefore less useful, in society.

WEDNESDAY.

On the humble and religious Enjoyment of the Blessings of Life.

"AND God saw every thing that He "had made, and behold it was very "good."

Such was the face of things at the creation. Every view, that could be taken, was a view of order and beauty, of happiness and pleasure. Too soon, by the frailty and by the guilt of man, this happy state was changed; and through sin, death and misery entered into the world. Every part of our world was affected by the general disorder. The earth produced thorns and thistles. The seasons became unfavourable. The beasts grew wild and savage: and hence sprung a necessity of labour and self-defence. Toil and weariness must be its natural consequence to bodies now become mortal and corrupti-

ble. Pain and sickness, the infirmities of old age, the fear of death and sufferings both for ourselves and our friends, with all that variety of evils that burthen human life: all are the sad effects of sin. The disorder of our minds, the vehemence of our passions, the dimness of our understandings, those tendencies to evil, which even the best people, at some times, must feel strongly working in their bosoms, are the bitter fruits of the original corruption of human nature in the first of men, our common parent. Hence surely we should draw the strongest motives of humility, and throw ourselves down in the deepest abasement of soul, before that God of holiness, in whose "sight the Heavens "are not pure; and who chargeth his "angels with folly." "How much more "man which is a worm, and the son of "man, which is a worm?" Unassisted human nature could not be in a more perfect state than our first parents were created: infinitely superior certainly to whatever we can imagine of good or ex-

cellent among ourselves. If they were such frail, such wretched creatures, and so soon forfeited their very beings—Good God! then what is the very best of us! "Let our confusion be ever before us:" "Let the shame of our face cover us."

Strange it may seem, after these considerations, to mention a happy and chearful enjoyment of our beings, as a serious and important duty. Many good persons, who have deeply dwelt on this dark view of our mortal state, have represented it as utterly unfit and sinful for such creatures, in such a world, to think of any thing but suffering and mourning. But as sure as our heavenly Father is good to all, and peculiarly so to us, his helpless new-adopted children, so surely they are widely mistaken *. The blessed promise of our redemption was uttered in the same moment with the doom of our mortality, and from that moment all was good again.

* See this idea expanded, and its consequences shewn, in the Rambler, No. XLIV, by Mrs. Carter; from which pe haps Miss Talbot took the hint.

Pain, and suffering, and sorrow, became remedies to cure our corrupted nature: temptations, but a purifying fire to prove and to refine our virtue: and death, a kind release from toil, a happy admission into a better paradise. Through our blessed Saviour, we have obtained the grace of God to guide us in all our ways, and to support us under all our distresses. Through Him, in Him, we have every thing that can make us happy, unless we wilfully destroy ourselves. "Rejoice then, in the "Lord, all ye righteous, be thankful all ye "who are true of heart."

Serious and careful indeed we ought to be, watchful and diligent, humble and submissive; reflecting deeply on the frailty and vileness of our nature, and the important, the eternal interest, that depends on this our short, and very uncertain time of trial here. In this sense we ought to "work out our salvation with fear and "trembling," and even to "rejoice before "the Lord with reverence." But while we "keep innocence, and take heed to

" the thing that is right," let our chearful hearts and looks confess the goodness of our gracious Master, who " gives us rain " from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, " filling our hearts with food and glad- " ness." Of Him, who has made every thing good and pleasant: who has the tenderest consideration for all our infirmities, and has provided every support, and every relief that can make our passage through this world tolerable and comfortable to us. With joyful gratitude let us accept and improve these his mercies, and indulgencies. Let us make this world as happy as we can to ourselves and one another: to do this, we need only be good Christians. Our wills being perfectly resigned, will acquiesce without pain, in whatever disposals Providence may see fit to make of us, and ours: and taking " no " thought for to-morrow," we shall neither be tormented with vain schemes, nor anxious fears. Our desires being moderate, we shall pass easily and quietly through life: and no unruly passions or vehement

wishes, will discompose our peace. Being free from private interests and selfish views, we shall have no rivalries nor contests with our neighbours. Being in perfect charity with all men, we shall with all be easy, chearful, friendly: in every thing studying to promote their good and happiness: and in our turn receiving from many of them offices of kindness: and from such as are ungrateful, receiving the greatest benefit of all, a noble opportunity to exercise those duties, on which God's forgiveness of ourselves depends. With pleasure and complacence our heavenly Father looks down on every society of his children united in brotherly affection, and gives his blessing to every set of friends, and neighbours, and relations, that perform their mutual relative duties, as they ought, and love and delight in one another. Every innocent entertainment, that keeps up the chearfulness and kindness of society, He approves. "The voice of joy and health is "in the dwellings of the righteous." Our health can alone be preserved by temper-

ance, calmness, and industry. Industry too makes the world look beautiful around us. It turns the barren wilderness into a fertile pleasant land: and for thorns and thistles, plants the rose-tree and the vine: or sows the tender grass and useful corn. Industry preserves us from inclemencies of weather, and finds some means to supply every want. It procures us where-with to give alms to the poor, and thereby enables us to lay up a treasure in Heaven.

Happiness, then, a great degree of it, is in our power, even at present. But fools that we are, we forfeit even present happiness, for the indulgence of every peevish, froward humour. Let me examine myself a little on this. As much as I condemn it, am I not often guilty of this unaccountable folly? Am I not readier to cherish unkind suspicions of those I live amongst, than to put a fair, and favourable interpretation upon every disagreeable incident? Am I not almost upon the watch to take offence at every trifling disregard? Do I not think it beneath me ever to take

the first step towards a reconciliation? Do I not make it a point of honour to keep up resentment, even though it pains me? How much happier are they, who go through the world with an easy good humour! Never suspecting that any body means them ill, who does not really and seriously hurt them: passing over every trifle: and by placing themselves above all such peevish follies, maintaining more real dignity, than those who are the proudest.

THURSDAY.

The Duty and Manner of being useful in Society.

"BLESSED are the merciful, for they "shall obtain mercy." How greatly do we all of us need this blessing; poor guilty creatures, who are every day offending infinite goodness, and provoking almighty power, and perfect justice! How then shall we be merciful as we ought? Can this duty be practised by any but the great, or the injured?—In relieving the distrest, or in pardoning offenders? Yes: every one of us may practise it every day we live. It is a great mistake to think there is no superiority, but that, which rank and fortune give. Every one of us may in something or other assist or instruct some of his fellow-creatures: for the best of human race is poor and needy, and all have a mutual dependence on one another: there

is no body that cannot do some good: and every body is bound to do diligently all the good they can. It is by no means enough to be rightly disposed, to be serious, and religious in our closets: we must be useful too, and take care, that as we all reap numberless benefits from society, society may be the better for every one of us. It is a false, a faulty, and an indolent humility, that makes people sit still and do nothing, because they will not believe that they are capable of doing much: for every body can do something. Every body can set a good example, be it to many, or to few. Every body can in some degree encourage virtue and religion, and discountenance vice and folly. Every body has some one or other whom they can advise, or instruct, or in some way help to guide through life. Those who are too poor to give alms, can yet give their time, their trouble, their assistance in preparing or forwarding the gifts of others: in considering, and representing distrest cases to those, who can

relieve them: in visiting and comforting the sick and afflicted. Every body can offer up their prayers for those who need them: which, if they do reverently and sincerely, they will never be wanting in giving them every other assistance, that it should please God to put in their power. Even those whose poor and toilsome life can admit of their giving no other help to society, can by their frugality, and industry, at least keep themselves, in a great measure, from being burthensome to the public. A penny thus saved, is a penny given. Dreadful state of those idle creatures, who dragging on a wretched, profligate life, in laziness and rags, draw to themselves those charities, that ought to support the helpless, and really disabled poor! Severely, I fear, shall they be accountable for it at the last day: and every one in proportion, who lives a useless and burthensome drone in society. It is our duty to prevent poverty, as well as to relieve it. It is our duty to relieve every other kind of distress, as well as the

distress of poverty. People who are always innocently chearful, and good-humoured, are very useful in the world. They maintain peace and happiness, and spread a thankful temper among all that live around them.

Thus for in general: but it is well worth considering in particular my own duties and obligations. Who are the people that I ought especially to study to make happy? Are they parents?—What a debt of gratitude do I owe them, for all their care of me, and for me, in my helpless years? How kindly did they bear with the froward infirmities of my childhood: and shall not I with most affectionate tenderness support and relieve all those, which years and cares bring upon them? My more active strength and vigour, my younger spirits and clearer thoughts, may now make me, in my turn, very helpful to them. If they are good people and good parents, I am sure this is my duty: if otherwise, I owe them one of still higher importance. I owe them the most earnest endeavours I can use for the reformation

of their faults, or instruction of their ignorance. This duty extends to all my relations: and to all from whom I have ever received any benefit, or any offices of friendship. If it is my misfortune that any of them should be bad people, though they have been good to me; or if any of those who are related to me, are engaged in a wrong course of life, ought I to fly from them, and leave them to ruin? No: gratitude and affection forbid it. Ought I then to encourage vice, and flatter folly, if it happens among those that I love? This my higher duty to Almighty God, to truth and virtue, absolutely forbid. What then is to be done? To preserve the tenderest affection for their persons, and keep up and declare openly the strongest abhorrence of their faults. To avoid every degree and every instance of ease and familiarity, that may seem to give the least countenance to their vices; and at the same time to employ every art, and every earnest endeavour that can have the least chance of reclaiming them. To pray for

and pity them: to reprove, and advise them: to please and oblige them, in every thing I innocently can.——But if, upon the whole, I find them irreclaimable, and myself in the least possible danger of being infected by their example—then to fly them, as I would the plague; then to cut off a right hand, and pluck out a right eye *, and break through every fondness, and every attachment, that would destroy my highest, my eternal interest. No ties that subsist among human creatures, can be so strong, can be so dear, or ought to be so indissoluble, as those which for ever bind us to our Creator and Redeemer.

Next to the bonds of nature, are those of choice. Married persons are bound to the observance of very sacred vows, and ought therefore often to recollect them and examine their conduct by them.

* That is, rather to submit to every misery and misfortune that might befall me from the want of the support and assistance of my parents, than to endanger my salvation.

Among other things, they should carefully consider, whether they have so strict a guard upon their temper as they ought, now the happiness of another person is made so greatly to depend on their easy good humour and chearfulness. Whether they assist and improve one another: and whether they are ready to receive assistance and advice as kindly as to give it. Whether they preserve a delicacy of behaviour, a neatness of appearance, a gentleness of manner, a mildness of speech. Whether they enter kindly and affectionately into one another's interests and concerns.

Friends should consider what engagements they are entered into with each other, how strictly they are bound diligently to promote each other's welfare: to think of one another candidly and kindly: to overlook little offences, to bear infirmities: to repay kindnesses a thousand fold: to be watchful over each other's conduct: to be true, sincere, faithful, obliging, open, constant: and to have the

generous courage of reproving and opposing each other's follies and faults.

All persons should consider to whom they are accountable for their time, their labour, the superfluity of their fortune: to masters, to friends, to society in general, to the deserving, or the helpless poor. Rich persons owe a due portion of their riches to works of charity and to the public: the great owe their protection to merit: and all people owe it to themselves, to improve every moment, and every opportunity, this life affords them.

Surely while I am making these reflections, I cannot omit more literal debts, and more immediate duties. Do I owe money, I am not able to pay? Let me retrench every superfluous expence, till my real debts are paid. Let me work and labour indefatigably, till I am enabled to be honest: and let me not be one moment easy, while I unjustly live on the expence of other people, and am hurtful to the society, that ought to be the better for me.

It is worth considering too what promises I have made. Were they ever so rash, if they engaged me in nothing contrary to innocence, it is my duty to fulfil them. Happy if it teaches me the wisdom, to be more cautious for the future.

FRIDAY.

On the Happiness of the present State, and the Self-denial required in it.

"BLESSED are they that mourn, for "they shall be comforted." Alas does it not seem from this, and many other passages of Scripture, worthy of all observance, and of all acceptation, as if it was our bounden duty in this world to lead a melancholy, wretched, uncomfortable life? And can this indeed be the will of Him, who delighteth in mercy? Who filleth our hearts with food and gladness, and has, in not a few places, expressly commanded us to "rejoice evermore?" Is there then, an inconsistency in the duties of religion? God forbid! Yet short-sighted men, capable of taking into one view, but a part of the vast and perfectly consistent scheme of duty, and guided too generally by passion or weakness, are perpetually acting as

if this was the case. Some free spirits there are, who throw off all lawful restraint, and fully satisfied with themselves if they keep within the widest bounds of what is just allowable, indulge without caution in every thing they think so. Their whole time is given up to mirth and jollity: their whole fortunes perhaps are spent upon themselves, without any regard to the calls of charity or duty. Jollily they go on in life, till some unforeseen misfortune stops them short, and throws a deep gloom over their sunny landscape.

Another sort of people, much to be esteemed, and greatly to be pitied, are scrupulous about every thing, and, frighted by misapprehensions of some alarming texts, dare not allow themselves in the most innocent conveniencies, and most harmless, and, on many accounts, useful and commendable pleasure. Their minds are so truly pious, that they are far from deliberately thinking of the infinitely great and good God, as a hard and rigid master: but they act with such a slavish fear, as must

needs make those, who are less well-disposed, frame such horridly false imaginations of Him: and their well-meant strictness has the most dangerous tendency in the world.

Between these two extremes undoubtedly lies the plain path of duty: the narrow, but not thorny road, that leads through the truest comfort this life can afford, to everlasting happiness in a better.

The natural enjoyments of life are dispensed to us by a gracious Providence, to mitigate its natural evils, and make our passage through it not only supportable, but, at fit times and seasons, so far pleasant, as to make us go on with vigour, chearfulness, and gratitude: and to give us some kind of earnest of what we are bid to hope hereafter; some kind of faint notion what happiness is: some sensible assúrances, that there really is such a thing, though not to be, in any high degree, enjoyed on this side of the grave. —Still it is a yet more merciful dispensa-

tion of the same fatherly care, that pain and imperfection, satiety and disappointment, should be so mixed up with all our best enjoyments in this low state of being, as to turn our chief aim and desire towards heaven. And let us not fear, unless we wilfully and madly throw ourselves into a giddy round of pleasures, on purpose to be intoxicated by them, Providence will mercifully interpose in the fullest tide of innocent prosperity, and make us, by some means or other, feel an emptiness and dissatisfaction, in the best, this world can give: especially may this be hoped by those, who take care to keep their minds always open to such serious thoughts and right impressions, as will perpetually present themselves, if not rejected: and who reserve some leisure time in every day, for reading and reflecting.

Our Maker knows so well the weakness of our frame, that he hath not left it to us, to inflict upon ourselves, merely by way of punishment, such sufferings as He sees it necessary for us to undergo. That task

would be so hard a one, that He would by no means impose it upon us. No: He will take care himself, that we shall unavoidably feel and experience a great deal of that evil which sin introduced into the world: and all He requires of us, is to support it as we ought. He requires nothing contrary to reason, and the innocent inclinations of nature: if any of his laws appear harsh and difficult, it is from their opposition to our acquired habits, our prejudices and corruptions. To forgive injuries, to return good for evil, to live peaceably with all men, to be always mild, obliging, and good humoured, to be kind and patient, charitable and industrious, temperate, sober, and modest; these are no grievous laws to a pure, and well-tuned mind: nor can its genuine dictates be better complied with, than by observing them. Still, they will be a very grievous restraint on the licentiousness of our corrupted wills, our heightened passions, and indulged imaginations. To be continually attentive to our conduct in every minute instance, to set a watch before our mouth, and keep

the door of our lips, to set scourges over our thoughts, and the discipline of wisdom over our hearts, requires a soberness of mind, a diligence, a resolute adherence to duty, that may undoubtedly deserve the name of self-denial, and mortification: though in effect nothing so certainly ensures our happiness, both here and hereafter. To think we can do this by our own strength, would be presumptuous and vain. Tell a man, helpless with the palsy, that perfect health is his natural and eligible state; convince him ever so clearly how happy it would be for him to become active and industrious—your eloquence is mockery, and will not help him to the use of a single limb. But though we daily confess that we have "no health in "us," He who did actually say to the sick of the palsy, "Arise, take up thy "bed, and walk," and was immediately obeyed, can effectually relieve our still more helpless state. To this sovereign physician we can apply for help, and by the aid He imparts, are enabled to follow

the regimen He enjoins; and thus to "go on from strength to strength, till "unto the God of Gods shall appear "every one in Sion."

Though our comfortable passage through this life, and the attainment of unspeakable blessedness in another, are the allowed, the necessary, the enjoined objects of our pursuit, yet still, in a great degree, we are to renounce ourselves. By sincere humility we are to consider the vileness and wretchedness of our natural state: we are to acknowledge, that of ourselves we are able to do nothing as we ought: and, far from indulging any thoughts of vanity or self-complacence, we are, when we have done our very best, to confess, with unfeigned lowliness, that we are unprofitable servants. We are to trust and hope alone in the merits and intercession of our blessed Redeemer; and to own ourselves, "less "than the least of God's mercies." As his creatures, we are to direct all our thoughts and actions to his honour and service. "Whether we eat or drink, or

" whatever we do, we are to do all to " the glory of God." In every thing we are to consider carefully the rule of duty: not scrupulously or superstitiously, for that tends to the dishonour of God and religion, as well as our own discomfort. We are never to do any thing for so low an end, as merely to gratify our own childish humour; but in all cases, to moderate and guide ourselves by the rules of reason and religion. Thus, even in using the necessary refreshments, the easy amusements, and innocent pleasures of life, we are to behave with a due sense of that God, who is every where present. We are to look up to Him with thankfulness, as the bountiful bestower of all good, and chearfully accept these indulgencies for the ends to which he has appointed them. Food, to restore our strength wasted in active service, to preserve our health and ease: sleep, to renew our wearied spirits: pleasure, to gladden our hearts, and fill them with pious gratitude and filial love. This cuts off at once all that intemperance, that

crosses those good purposes, destroys our health, distresses our hearts, makes our lives sluggish and useless, and dissipates or corrupts our minds. Riches and honours also are to be received with thanksgiving, by whomsoever Providence allots them to; but then they are to be diligently, and carefully, and generously employed in the best purposes: and even the richest and the greatest ought to deny themselves all indulgencies of mere humour and fancy, how well soever they may seem able to afford it, and kindly and faithfully consider the more pressing wants of their distressed fellow-creatures. To answer the purposes of charity the rich must be frugal, and the poor industrious; and all give freely and discreetly, as proper calls require. Every body, in their turns, to maintain the peace of society and christian concord, must repress the little risings of temper, and fretfulness of humour; must be ready to forgive and forget, to indulge and overlook.

It is endless to go on enumerating instances, in which the just, the necessary adherence to our duty, requires us to deny our sinful selves. Our cowardice, our false shame, our vanity, our weakness and irresolution, our fondness and partial affection, our indolence and love of ease: these, and numberless infirmities more, must be struggled with and conquered, when we are called out to encounter dangers: to confess our Saviour before men; to withstand the strong torrent of custom and fashion, of importunity and ill example: to turn a deaf ear to flattery, or candidly acknowledge our errors: to resist solicitations: to give righteous judgment; to forget all our private relations and attachments, where justice or public good are concerned: to resign our dearest enjoyments, when it is the will of God we should: to check our sorrows in their fullest flow; and to go on indefatigably improving ourselves, and doing good to others, till the night overtakes us, "in "which no man can work."

The sufferings which it shall please Almighty God to inflict upon us, we are to accept with humble resignation; acknowledging his justice, and submitting to it without a murmur. Thus patiently also we are to receive all the lesser crosses He sees fit to lay upon us; nor ever suffer ourselves to fret or repine at the various infirmities of human nature, in ourselves or others. All these we must look upon as parts of that penalty justly inflicted on our first parents guilt; and heartily thank Him, that He does not, according to the terrifying notions of popery, either expect us to inflict them on ourselves, or give us the dreadful alternative of a purgatory after death. Uncommanded severities, that are of no apparent use, but to torment ourselves, and sour our natures, and shorten our lives, can never be acceptable to our gracious Maker *. Our blessed

* *Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.* Romans xii. 20. Surely then it must follow that we have no more right to revenge, or punish our own offences upon ourselves, than as private individuals we have

Saviour, when He mentions fasting as a duty, along with prayer and almsgiving, leaves the frequency and strictness of it to our own discretion: and only insists upon one circumstance, which is, that we should avoid in it all hypocrisy and ostentation; and be careful to keep up all ease, good humour and agreeableness of behaviour. There are very proper occasions for exercising this duty, without the least superstition or moroseness, and where it may tend to the best purposes. Public calamities, private distresses or temptations, perplexities and difficulties, times of peculiarly solemn devotion, and of resolutely endeavouring to conquer such obstinate faults and ill habits, as, like the dumb spirit in the Gospel, can "come out only "by prayer and fasting." But where it makes us appear stiff and disagreeable, interferes with the innocent chearfulness of

upon our offending neighbour. In both cases it must be left to God; for as we are unable to judge of the extent of the wrong-doing, so neither can we of the proper measure of the deserved punishment.

society, or may influence our health or temper in any wrong way, in such cases it becomes a hurtful superstition, and as such unallowable. To observe the public fasts appointed by authority, in a manner suited to every person's strength and ability, with decency and reverence, can have none of these evil consequences: and the practice of this duty, at fit times, and in a reasonable degree, is an excellent remembrancer of the wretchedness of being attached to any sensual gratifications, and the easiness as well as necessity, at fit times to forbear them.

SATURDAY.

The Importance of Time in relation to Eternity.

ANOTHER week is past; another of those little limited portions of time, which number out my life. Let me stop a little here, before I enter upon a new one, and consider what this life is, which is thus imperceptibly stealing away, and whither it is conducting me? What is its end and aim, its good and its evil, its use and improvement? What place does it fill in the universe? What proportion does it bear to eternity?

This mortal life is the beginning of existence to beings made for immortality, and graciously designed, unless by wilful guilt they forfeit it, for everlasting happiness. Compared with eternity, its longest duration is less than a moment: therefore its good and evil, considered without a re-

gard to the influence they may have on an eternity to come, must be trifling to a degree below contempt. The short scene begun in birth, and closed by death, is acted over millions of times, in every age; and all the little concerns of mortality are pursued, transacted, and forgotten, like the labours of a bee-hive, or the bustle of an ant-hill. "The thing which hath been, "it is that which shall be, and that which "is done, is that which shall be done: "and there is no new thing under the "sun." Our wisdom, therefore, is to pass through this busy dream as calmly as we can; and not suffer ourselves to be more deeply attached to any of these transitory things, than the momentariness and unimportance of them deserves.

But considering this short life as a probation for eternity, as a trial whose issue is to determine our everlasting state, its importance to ourselves appears beyond expression great, and fills a right mind with equal awe and transport. The important day will come, when there shall be

a new thing indeed, but not "under the "sun:" for "heaven and earth shall pass "away;" but the words of Him, who created them, "shall not pass away."

What then is the good or the evil of life, but as it has a tendency to prepare, or unfit us for that decisive day, when "the "Son of man shall come in the clouds with "great power and great glory, and shall "send his angels, and shall gather to-"gether his elect from the four winds." That Son of man who is the Son of God, "blessed for evermore," and once before came down from heaven, and took upon him this our mortal nature, with all its innocent infirmities and sufferings; and subjected himself even to the death of the cross, that he might redeem us from all our sins, and obtain the gift of everlasting life for all, who should not wilfully frustrate this last and greatest effort of divine mercy.

What then have we to do, but with love and gratitude unutterable to embrace the offers of salvation; and henceforth be-

come in every thing His true and faithful disciples? To whom should we live but to Him, who died for us? To whom should we give up ourselves, but to Him who gave up himself for us? whose "yoke is "easy, and his burden light." In whom should we trust, but in eternal truth? In whom should we chearfully hope, but in infinite goodness? Whom should we copy, but him, who was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, and has left us an example, that we should "follow his "steps?" Which if we do faithfully to the utmost of our power, his grace shall so assist us, that in the end we shall be where he is, to behold his glory, and partake his bliss.

Let me think then, and think deeply, how I have employed this week past. Have I advanced in, or deviated from the path that leads to life? Has my time been improved or lost, or worse than lost, misspent? If the last, let me use double diligence to redeem it? Have I spent a due portion of my time in acts of devotion

and piety, both private, public, and domestic? And have they been sincere, and free from all mixture of superstition, moroseness, or weak scrupulosity? Have I, in society, been kind and helpful, mild, peaceable and obliging? Have I been charitable, friendly, discreet? Have I had a due regard, without vanity or ostentation, to set a good example? Have I been equally ready to give and receive instruction, and proper advice? Careful to give no offence, and patient to take every thing, in good part? Have I been honest, upright and disinterested? Have I, in my way, and according to my station and calling, been diligent, frugal, generous, and industrious to do good? Have I, in all my behaviour, consulted the happiness and ease of those I live with, and of all who have any dependance upon me? Have I preserved my understanding clear, my temper calm, my spirits chearful, my body temperate and healthy, and my heart in a right frame? If to all these questions I can humbly, yet confidently

answer, that I have done my best: If I have truly repented all the faulty past, and made humble, yet firm, and vigorous, and deliberate resolutions for the future, poor as it is, the honest endeavour will be graciously accepted: And I may to-morrow, gladly and securely approach the sacred table, and partake that bread of life, which our blessed Saviour gave, to nourish to all goodness those who receive it worthily, and to be not only the means of grace, but the pledge of glory. Amen!

ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

ESSAY I.

On the Employment of Time in the different Situations in Society.

ONE scarce ever walked, with any set of company, by a neat cottage, but somebody or other has expressed their envy of the pastoral inhabitant. It is quite common, among people of easy and affluent circumstances, to imagine in a splenetic moment, every laborious situation happier than their own: and to wish an exchange with the plough-man, the shepherd, or the mechanic. I have sometimes thought this an affectation: and a very false sentiment it surely is. For if all made the improvement they ought of their own way of life, there can be little doubt, but the higher, and more leisurable stations would be, upon the whole, the happiest. That they rarely prove so in fact, is the fault of

the possessors: who unable to avoid their necessary cares, and unindustrious to seek out their true advantages, sink under a weight, that they might easily balance, so as not to feel it.

What is generally called the spleen, is no other than the uneasy consciousness and dissatisfaction of a mind formed for nobler pursuits and better purposes, than it is ever put upon. Mere pleasure is an end too unworthy for a rational being to make its only aim. Yet persons, unconstrained by necessity, are so apt to be allured by indolence and amusement, that their better faculties are seldom exercised as they ought to be: though every employment that serves no other purpose than merely to while away the present moment, gives the mind a painful sensation, that whether distinctly attended to, or not, makes up when frequently repeated, the sum of that satiety and tediousness so often lamented, in prosperous life.

There is, doubtless, to many persons a real difficulty in making the choice of an

employment, when they are left perfectly at liberty, to chuse what they will. Necessity is perhaps the most satisfactory guide: and for that reason alone, the artificer, the shepherd and the farmer, are happier than their affluent neighbours. The poor man must either work or starve: so he makes the best of his lot; works chearfully, and enjoys the fruit of his honest labour. The rich, the easy, the indolent, have a task as necessary, but not so obvious. There is room for some doubt, and uncertainty as to the way of setting about it. A life of sublime speculation is too high for the present state: a life of soft pleasure is too low. The right medium is a life busied in the exercise of duty: and duties there are peculiar to every situation, and an enquiry into these is the leading one *.

* This is rather obscurely expressed. The meaning seems to be, that an enquiry into each person's peculiar situation is his *leading duty*; i. e. that duty, without proper attention to which he cannot practise the rest.

I was drawn into this speculation by having indulged, last Summer, a whole week of idleness in a visit I made to an old acquaintance in the country. I, too, took it into my head one afternoon, to envy a poor man, who was hard at work for his livelihood mending the roof of a church, where he had some danger, as well as toil. I, who had been seeking out the coolest shade, and reclining on the greenest turf, amid the fragrance of a thousand flowers: I, who had leisure to attend to the warbling of birds around me, or in peace and safety might amuse myself with the liveliest wit and eloquence of *Greece* and *Rome*—would have resigned all these delights with joy, to sit whistling at the top of a high ladder, suffering both heat and hunger.

After ruminating much on so odd a phænomenon, I could find no better way of accounting for it, than from the preferableness of any allotted employment, to an inactive indulgence of selfish pleasure. It would therefore be worth while for all of

us to consider what is our allotted employment, and sitting down contented with that, all might be more than tolerably happy, and no such great inequalities in the world, as are usually complained of.

Not that all amusement and indulgence should be severely banished. When properly and proportionably mixed with the more serious purposes of life, they become a part of duty. Rest and relaxation are necessary to health: the elegant arts refine our imaginations *: and the most trifling gaities serve to cherish our good humour and innocent alacrity of heart. The enjoyment of proper delights fills us with gratitude to their all-bountiful Dispenser, and adds to the bands of society a flowery chain of no small strength, and does justice to a fair world, that is full of them. The number of them varies according to numberless circumstances: but, in no circumstance, are mere amusement and relaxation to be considered as the business

* ——ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores.— OVID.

of life, or to be substituted for that real task, which, in some instance or other, is allotted to every state.

Let then the shepherd enjoy his peace, his meadows, and his oaten pipe *. Let the honest artificer pursue his trade with chearful industry, and rejoice that the weight of states and kingdoms does not lie upon his shoulders. Let the man of a middle station know his happiness, in possessing with quiet obscurity, all the comforts of society and domestic life, with leisure, and advantage for making the noblest improvements of the mind. Let the rich and great still look higher, and instead of repining at

" Ceremony, the Idol Ceremony !"

which debars them of those free and humble joys, delight themselves with their extensive power of doing good, and diffusing happiness around them.

* Had Dr. Johnson reviewed this Essay, all its moral worth would not have induced him to pass over the *oaten pipe*, without severe animadversion.

What an alternative is put into the choice of man! By employment or misuse of the faculties assigned him, he may rise to what dignity, or sink to what baseness he will, in the class of moral beings. Human existence is an inestimable gem, capable of receiving whatever polish we will please to give it: and if heightened with the diligence it ought, will shine in due time, with a lustre more dazzling than the stars *.

It would not be fantastical (for its foundation is in truth and reality) to form a scale of nobility † very different from the common distinction of birth, titles, and

* Is not this the very circumstance in which the true dignity of human nature consists; the power inherent in each individual of exalting it to the highest degree of happiness with the capability of retaining that happiness even to eternity?

† This was humorously attempted in a late periodical publication, (probably either the Mirror or the Lounger) in a manner more remotely connected with morality; in which bodily health is made the criterion of greatness; and a man is said to deserve more or less respect, in proportion to the strength or weakness of his constitution.

fortune; and wholly according to that figure, persons make in the moral world, and according to their various degrees of improvement and usefulness. The change would not be total. Many, who are now high in life, would continue so *: but not a few would be strangely degraded.

Of what account indeed in the true system of life is he (be he what he will in greatness) who sleeps away his being in indolent amusement? Whose hours hang heavy on his hands, without the gaming-table, the bottle, the buffoon or the taylor? And whose mind amidst them all, is perpetually clouded with a splenetic discontent, the inevitable rust of unused faculties? Uncomfortable to himself, and unimportant to his fellow-creatures, whatever were his advantages of nature and fortune, he has degraded himself from them all. A day-labourer, who does his ut-

* Miss Talbot's own character, as has been observed in the Preface to the Letters between her and Mrs. Carter, forcibly illustrates this observation. Happily for the world there are still many instances of it.

most at the plough and the cart, is a much more respectable being.

In this scale, the miser's plea of poverty would be readily admitted, as witnessed by his anxious look and sordid life: while the frank heart and open countenance should be set down for the merit of a plum.

Even the miser himself has a class of inferiors, and that, without speaking of the downright vicious, who come under another kind of consideration. These are the oyster-livers: such as lose the very use of their limbs from mere laziness, and waste year after year fixed to one uncomfortable spot; where they eat and drink, sleep and grumble on: while the duty of their situation properly attended to, would make them happy in themselves, and a happiness to others. Were the pearl taken out of that unsightly shell, what a circulation of riches and ornaments might it make to society! But while these poor animals can fatten on their barren rock, it matters not to them.

If cowardice sinks persons lower than all other vices, beneath even these will come in the poor slaves of false shame, the mean deserters of their duty. How many, that now pass for men of honour and spirit, would appear more weak and timorous than female fear. Some not daring to refuse a challenge *: others drinking against inclination, or affronting religion against their own consciences: or prodigal of health and fortune, from merely wanting strength to resist the vain current of fashion. No black slave sold in a market is so far from liberty, as every one of these.

In numberless such ways, does the bewildered race of man deviate from the paths of felicity and glory, and childishly squander away inestimable advantages. For just in proportion to the improvement of those faculties, with which heaven has intrusted us, our beings are ennobled, and

* This was a favourite idea with Miss Talbot. See it farther illustrated in the Letters between her and Mrs. Carter, vol. i. p. 327. &c, which produced the story of Eugenio in the Adventurer.

our happiness heightened. The enjoyments of a mere animal existence are flat and low. The comforts of plain ordinary life, in those who have some feelings of the connexions of society, but no idea of any thing higher, rise in the next degree. The pleasures of an improved imagination take in a circle vastly wider and more fair. The joys of a benevolent heart animated by an active diligent spirit, refined sentiments, and affections justly warm, exceed the most gay imagination. The strong sense, and genuine love of truth and goodness, with all those noblest dispositions, that fill a mind affected and penetrated, as it ought to be, with a sense of religion, and practising every part of christian duty, ascends still higher, and raises humanity to that point, from which it begins to claim a near alliance with superior natures.

ESSAY II.

On true Politeness.

POLITENESS is the most agreeable band of society, and I cannot help attributing more ill consequences to the general disregard of it, than people, at present, are apt to attend to. Perhaps it may be so intirely laid aside, by the time that this manuscript comes into any body's hand *, that the page, which preserves some faint outlines of its resemblance, may be thought no unuseful one; or at least by the lovers of antiquity, may be read with pleasure, as containing some curious

* That time seems now to have arrived, when freedom has so generally usurped the place of politeness, and even gallant attention to the weaker sex has given way to ease not unfrequently degenerating into rudeness itself. If Miss Talbot's age deserved the censure contained in the text, what must be thought of the present.

remains of an elegant art: an art, that humanized the world, for many years, till the fine spirits of the present age thought fit to throw it off, as a narrow restraint, and a mean prejudice of education.

Politeness is the just medium between form and rudeness. It is the consequence of a benevolent nature, which shows itself, to general acquaintance, in an obliging, unconstrained civility, as it does, to more particular ones, in distinguished acts of kindness. This good nature must be directed by a justness of sense, and a quickness of discernment, that knows how to use every opportunity of exercising it, and to proportion the instances of it, to every character and situation. It is a restraint laid by reason and benevolence, upon every irregularity of the temper, which, in obedience to them, is forced to accommodate itself even to the fantastic laws, which custom and fashion have established, if, by that means it can procure, in any degree, the satisfaction, or good opinion of any

part of mankind. Thus paying an obliging deference to their judgment, so far as it is not inconsistent with the higher obligations of virtue and religion.

This must be accompanied with an elegance of taste, and a delicacy observant of the least trifles, which tend to please or to oblige: and though its foundation must be rooted in the heart, it can scarce be perfected without a complete knowledge of the world.

In society, it is the medium, that blends all different tempers, into the most pleasing harmony, while it imposes silence on the loquacious, and inclines the most reserved to furnish their share of the conversation, it represses the ambition of shining alone, and increases the desire of being mutually agreeable. It takes off the edge of raillery, and gives delicacy to wit. It preserves a proper subordination amongst all ranks of people, and can reconcile a perfect ease, with the most exact propriety.

To superiors it appears in a respectful freedom: no greatness can awe it into

servility, and no intimacy can sink it into a regardless familiarity.

To inferiors it shews itself in an unassuming good nature. Its aim is to raise them to you, not to let you down to them. It at once maintains the dignity of your station, and expresses the goodness of your heart.

To equals it is every thing that is charming. It studies their inclinations, prevents their desires, attends to every little exactness of behaviour, and all the time appears perfectly disengaged and careless.

Such, and so amiable is true politeness, by people of wrong heads and unworthy hearts disgraced in its two extremes: And, by the generality of mankind, confined within the narrow bounds of mere good breeding, which, in truth, is only one instance of it.

There is a kind of character, which does not in the least deserve to be reckoned polite, though it is exact in every punctilio of behaviour. Such as would not for the world omit paying you the civility of a

bow, or fail in the least circumstance of decorum: But then these people do this so merely for their own sake, that whether you are pleased or embarrassed with it, is little of their care. They have performed their own parts, and are satisfied. One there is, who says more civil things than half mankind besides, and yet, is "So obliging that he never obliged." For while he is paying the highest court to some one person of the company, he must of course neglect the rest, which is ill made up, by a forced recollection at last, and some lame civility, which, however it may be worded, does in effect express only this, "I protest I had quite forgot "you: but as insignificant as you are, I "must not, for my own sake, let you go "home out of humour." Thus every one in their turn, finding his civility to be just as variable as his interest, no one thinks himself obliged to him for it.

This then is a proof, that true politeness, whose great end is giving real pleasure, can have its source only in a virtuous

and benevolent heart. Yet this is not all: it must observe propriety too. There is a character of perfect good nature, that loves to have every thing about it happy or merry. This is a character greatly to be beloved, but has little claim to the title of politeness. Such persons have no notion of freedom without noise and tumult: and by taking off every proper restraint, and sinking themselves to the level of their companions, even lessen the pleasure these would have in the company of their superiors.

Cleanthes too loved to have every body about him pleased and easy. But in his family, freedom went hand in hand, with order; while his experience of the world, in an age of more real accomplishments, preserved his whole behaviour agreeable to his company, and becoming his station.

Certainly this regard to the different stations of life is too much neglected by all ranks of people. A few reflections will show this but too plainly. That the go-

vernment of states and kingdoms should be placed in a few hands was, in the earliest ages of the world, found necessary to the well-being of society. Power gave a kind of sanction to the persons in whose hands it was vested; and when the peoples' minds were awed into obedience, there was the less need of punishments to restrain their actions. Each various rank of them viewed, with profound respect, that which was most regularly beautiful; and the pile of government rose, in due proportion, with harmony in all its parts *.

Very different is the present scene, where all sorts of people put themselves upon a level: where the meanest and most ignorant censure without reserve, the greatest and the wisest: where the sublimest subjects are scanned without reverence, the softest treated without delicacy.

* If Mr. Burke never read these Essays, it is a curious circumstance that he should have made us of this same metaphor (though much more highly ornamented) in his admired work on the French Revolution.

There was a time, when from this principle of politeness, our sex received a thousand delicate distinctions, which made us as it were amends for our exclusion from the more shining and tumultuous scenes of life. Perhaps it is a good deal our own fault, that within some years, the manner of treating us has been entirely altered. When the fine lady becomes a hoyden, no wonder if the fine gentleman behaves to her like a clown. When people go out of their own proper character, it is like what silly folks imagine about going out of the conjurer's circle: beyond those limits you must expect no mercy.

It would be endless to reckon up the various errors on each side of true politeness, which form humourists and flatterers, characters of blunt or ceremonious impertinence. But that I may give as true a standard of the thing itself, as I am capable of doing, I will conclude my paper with the character of Cynthio, from whose conversation and behaviour I have possibly collected most of the hints which form it.

" Cynthio * has added to his natural " sense a thorough knowledge of the " world: by which he has attained that " masterly ease in behaviour, and that " graceful carelessness of manner, that " no body, I know, possesses in so high " a degree. You may see, that his po- " liteness flows from something superior " to the little forms of custom, from " a humane and benevolent heart di- " rected by a judgment, that always " seizes what is just and proper; and " formed into such an habitual good " breeding, that no forced attention even " puts you in mind, at the time, that

* In one of Mrs. Talbot's Letters to Mrs. Carter, she says that she believes the character of Cynthio to have been meant by her daughter for Dr. Gregory; but she adds, that in her opinion the character flatters him very much. Dr. Gregory was a Canon of Christ-church, and had married Lady Mary Grey, with all the branches of which family Mrs. and Miss Talbot were very intimately acquainted. It is probable that Miss Talbot was a better judge of the minute and delicate circumstances on which true politeness so much depends, than her mother was.

" Cynthio is taking pains to entertain
" you, though upon recollection you find
" him to be, for that very reason, a man
" of the compleatest politeness.

" His conversation is always suited to
" the company he is in, yet so as never to
" depart from the propriety of his own
" character. As he is naturally indolent,
" he is generally the least talkative of
" the set; but he makes up for this, by
" expressing more in a few words, than
" the generality of people do in a great
" many sentences. He is formed indeed
" for making conversation agreeable:
" since he has good nature, which makes
" him place every thing that can have a
" share in it, in the most favourable light
" that it is capable of: and a turn of
" humour, that can put the most trifling
" subject in some amusing point of view.

" In a large company, Cynthio was
" never known to engross the whole at-
" tention to some one favourite subject,
" which could suit with only a part of it;
" or to dictate, even in a small one.

" With a very quick discernment, to " avoid speaking or thinking severely of " the many faults and follies, this world " abounds with, is a proof of an excellent " temper too, which can be no way con- " stantly supported, and made in its " effects, consistent with itself, but upon " the basis of serious principles.

" This then is the support of Cynthio's " character, and this it is, that regulates " his actions, even where his natural " inclination would direct him diffe- " rently. Thus, when the welfare of the " public is concerned, he can assume a " strictness, that carries great awe with " it, and a severity, that a mere constitu- " tional good nature would be hurt by, " though it answers the most valuable " ends of true humanity. Thus his " natural indolence is allowed to show " itself, only in things of trifling conse- " quence, or such as he thinks so, be- " cause they regard only himself: but " whenever he has any opportunity of " serving a friend, or doing a worthy

" action, no body is so ready, so vigilant,
" so active, so constant in the pursuit;
" which is seldom unsuccessful, because
" he has a useful good sense, that directs
" him to the properest methods of pro-
" ceeding. Upon such an occasion, not
" the longest journey, or most tedious
" solicitation, no appearance of trouble or
" of danger can discourage him.

" Sincerity is so essential a part of
" friendship, that no one so perfect, in
" its other branches, can be wanting in
" that. But how, you will say, can this
" be reconciled with politeness? How can
" that, whose utmost care is never to
" offend, ever venture upon telling a dis-
" agreeable truth? Why this is one of the
" wonders, which a good and a right in-
" tention, well directed, can perform:
" and Cynthio can even oblige people,
" by telling them very plainly of their
" faults."

I perceive, I have wandered from my first intention, which was only to give a general sketch of this character, as influ-

enced by that humanity, whose consequence is such a desire of pleasing, as is the source of politeness. But before I have done with it, I must add this one distinguishing stroke, that though many people may excel in separate good qualities and accomplishments, more than Cynthio, yet I never saw them so equally proportioned, or so agreeably blended as in him, to form that whole behaviour that makes him the fittest example for an Essay on this subject.

ESSAY III.

On the Accommodation of the Temper to Circumstances.

LET me be allowed to make a new word, and let that word be *accommodableness.*

The disposition of mind, I mean by that word to express, is of such constant and universal use, that it is certainly worth while to distinguish it by a name of its own. We English have not much of it in our nature, and therefore it is no wonder we have not an expression to suit it. It is such a flexibity of mind, as hinders the least struggle between reason and temper. It is the very height and perfection of good humour, shown as well in an instantaneous transition from mirth to seriousness, when that is best suited to the place and people, as it is in the liveliest

flashes of gaiety. It is an art of sitting so loose from our own humours and designs, that the mere having expected, or intended, or wished a thing to be otherwise than it is, shall not, for a moment, ruffle our brows, or discompose our thoughts. It is an art, for it requires time and pains to perfect it.

All this is indeed included in what has been said of politeness, but it is worth dwelling upon in a new light. It is the means of making every trifling occurrence in life, of some use to us. For want of it, *liking and luck* are ever at cross purposes. To-day we are sad: and then if we fall into a jovial company, all their mirth seems displaced, and but grates upon our fancy. To-morrow, we are as whimsically determined to be merry: and then, how unsuited is our temper, to the scenes of sad improvement, we so often meet with! How unfit are we then to commiserate the wretched, or to draw just considerations from the melancholy side of life!

This body, by some accident or other, we look upon in a light of prejudice: a foolish story told of them, or perhaps a disagreeable look, or a peculiar trick, makes us lose all the advantage, that might be had, by attending to their more valuable qualifications: for every body has some.—Another we despise, merely for our own ignorance of their worth. We look upon persons in a light of burlesque, from some ridiculous circumstance: when, perhaps, their serious character has something really good in it, that is quite past over. I have felt it myself often: and that makes me dwell upon the subject, for I think, one always talks best from experience.

I have read somewhere a Fairy story, in which a princess is described, born under such a charm, that till she came to a certain age it was impossible she should ever enjoy any lasting satisfaction. The happiness of her ensuing life depended upon the observing this condition: and for that

reason those Fairies, who had the care of her education, were most exact in their attention to it. Did she begin to take pleasure in any employment? It was immediately changed, and her application was called off to some new one. As soon as she had got over the difficulties of that, she was engaged in a third: and so on, year after year, till she was quite grown up. If any amusement was proposed, if she began to taste the least delight, in the splendour of a public show, or the gaiety of a rural landscape, the scene was immediately shifted, and a dull solitude took the place of what had charmed her.

Such is our situation in this world. In such a case, all the poor princess had for it, was to shift her inclinations, as fast as the Fairies could her amusements: and when she had learned to do this, I think indeed, one might answer for it, that the rest of her life could not fail to be happy.

Our humours and dispositions are certainly as various, as the accidents that

happen to exercise them: but then, the misfortune is, that they are frequently misplaced. I have often been in a humour for moralizing and improving, when my fancy had much more properly been filled with gay images of an assembly: then, that idleness might not lose its due, how frequently have my thoughts wandered from a philosophical lecture, to a crowded park, nay sometimes from a sermon, to a ball-room?

To continue always in the same turn of humour, be it ever so graceful on some occasions, is nothing better than dancing smoothly out of time. Some people have such an eternal simper upon their face, that they will tell you the most melancholy story, or express the most pathetic concern, with a smile. Others have such an earnest attention, that they will listen to a gossip's tale with the gravity of a philosopher.

All have some good qualities, something or other, in their character or conversation,

that rightly attended to, we may be the better for. When in company with people of mere good humour, we should weaken all the mirthful faculties of our mind, and take this time for unbending our more serious thoughts. We are not to consider whether one is of a proper rank, or another of an agreeable aspect, or whether we might not be better employed in our closets, or better engaged in company elsewhere: but accommodate ourselves to the present situation, and make the best of it. Be the company ever so dull, they are human creatures at least, capable of feeling pleasure, or uneasiness, in some degree, of being obliged or disobliged: and therefore, if we are ever so dissatisfied ourselves, if we may contribute any way to the satisfaction of our stupid companions, good nature will find it no disagreeable employment, and it may well enough be put in the balance, against most of those, we are so angry to be interrupted in.

Had I set my heart on such a favourite scheme? and am I disappointed? This is what children well educated can bear with great good humour, and are rewarded with sugar-plums. Shall people then, who have the use of reason, and the pleasure of reflection upon reasonable actions, be more childish than they, and add one disagreeable thing to another, by tying ill humour to the heels of disappointment?

The mind, that is absolutely wedded to its own opinions, will cherish them to a degree of folly and obstinacy that would be inconceivable but for frequent instances: very frequent indeed in this country, which is reckoned, I believe justly, to abound in humourists, more than almost any nation of the habitable globe. Whether this be one effect attending on the glorious stubborness of the spirit of liberty, or whether we take some tincture from the November sullenness of the climate, I know not: but our want of ac-

commodableness is very perceivable in the reception which our common people usually give to foreigners. Their language is ridiculed, their manners observed with a haughty kind of contempt: all minds seem to sit aloof to them, as if they were enemies, encroachers, that have nothing to do amongst us, no right to give us trouble, or put us out of our way.

If we would but learn to put ourselves a little in the place of others, we should soon learn, with pleasure, to suit ourselves to their disposition. But we are apt to imagine, that every body must see every thing, just in the same light that it appears to us: if they do not, it is very strange, and they are no companions for us. Thus, it seems monstrous, in a foreigner to speak our language oddly, when we are so perfectly acquainted with it ourselves. We are prodigiously inclined to think people impertinent, for asking questions about what we know very well ourselves: unless indeed we happen to be in

a humour of dictating and instructing, and then it is a crime of the same nature, for people to know any thing before-hand, that we have a mind to tell them.

Thus we forget our first opinions of places, things, and people, and wonder that others do not, at first sight, perceive them, in the same light that we do, just at that time: though perhaps it is by dint of reflection, that we have placed them in it. It may however be speaking too generally to say *we*. I am sure I have often experienced this in myself.

It was the distinguishing character of a poor idiot, whom I had once occasion to see a good deal of, that he had so little of this accommodableness, as to be quite outrageous, upon the least alteration, in any trifling circumstances, he had been used to observe. He exprest his anger, in one way indeed, and we express ours in another, or perhaps are wise enough to keep most of it to ourselves: but there still remains enough to take off all the

grace of what we do, or submit to, thus unwillingly, and the principle of folly, that makes us feel so strong a dislike, is the same in both: only this poor creature deserved pity, while in us, it is a matter of choice.

ESSAY IV.

On Delicacy of Feeling.

THERE is no one disposition of the human heart that affords such exquisite pleasure, or pain, as that which we call *delicacy*. It is the polish of the mind, soiled by the least breath, and affected by the slightest touch. A delicate turn of thought is, in some cases, extremely agreeable, is the sign of a valuable mind, (for base metals are not capable of receiving any great degree of polish) but will not go half so well, through the world, as that which is more plain and rough.

Yet, as there is something in this disposition peculiarly elegant and amiable, people are apt to encourage themselves in it, till from a grace, it becomes a weakness, and diffuses unhappiness to all around them, who must weigh with the exactest

care all their words and actions: and it is extremely possible, that all their care may not be enough to prevent giving some grievous offence, which they never meant, and which will express itself in perpetual smartnesses, or an eternal flow of tears, according as the constitution of the delicate person inclines to anger, or to melancholy. In the latter case it is more unhappy than in the former: for hasty anger is easily past off; but no body of good nature can bear to see a person affected, in the most painful manner, by things so trifling, as they may be guilty of, every moment, without knowing any thing of the matter.

This consideration, should make us extremely careful in our behaviour, to those, amongst whom we live. Perhaps some little heedlessness of ours, may seem a most cruel slight to one, we never intend to grieve, and oppress a worthy mind with the most melancholy dejection. A careless word, spoken quite at random, or merely by rote, may give a delicate heart

the most anxious distress: and those of us, who have the most prudence and good nature, say and do an hundred things, in our way of talking, about characters we know little of, or behaving towards those, to whom we little attend, that have much more grievous consequences, than we are aware of.

But then, on the other hand, we should, in ourselves, most strictly guard against all excess of this delicacy; and though we cannot help feeling things, in the quickest manner, for the moment, we should arm our reason against our feeling, and not permit imagination to indulge it, and nurse it up into a misery: for misery if indulged, it will certainly occasion: since an excess of delicacy is the source of constant dissatisfaction, through too eager a pursuit of something every way higher, than is to be had.

The person of delicate judgment sees every thing, as it were, with a microscopic eye: so that what would be a pleasing object, to a common spectator, is, to him,

unsupportably coarse and disagreeable. The person of lively and delicate imagination disdains the common *routine* of comfort and satisfaction; and seeks for happiness in an airy sphere not formed to give it: or pursues misery, through a wild and endless maze, which at every turning grows more inextricable. By this refined delicacy of sentiment, to put ourselves on so different a footing, from the rest of the world, that it is scarce possible, we should ever understand one another, is only vain vexation.

In friendships especially, this excess of delicacy is often of fatal ill consequence. From hence spring suspicions and jealousies; from hence arise doubts and disquiets that know no end, unless it be, that they often quite weary out the patience of the persons, whom they are thus perpetually teazing for their affection. I have known instances of this kind, that are sufficient warnings against it.

As for the affairs of common life, they can scarcely go on where every little nicety

is to be turned into a matter of importance. I knew a family, good, agreeable, sensible, and fond of each other, to the highest degree: but where each was so delicate, and so tender of the delicacy of the rest, that they could never talk to one another, of any serious business, but were forced to transact it all, by means of a third person, a man of plain sense, and a common friend to all.

Poor Lucius! How much constraint and real uneasiness does he suffer from the delicacy that proceeds from having a genius infinitely superior to most he meets with. By having a mind above the low enjoyments of this state of being, he is deprived of many hours of most innocent chearfulness, which other people are happy in. He has an understanding, so fitted for the deepest researches, and the sublimest speculations, that the common affairs and engagements of life seem vastly beneath him. He has a delicacy, in his turn of mind, that is shocked every day, by the less refined behaviour and conversation of

the generality of mankind: and it must be a very chosen society indeed, that he prefers to his beloved solitude. This disposition gives him a reservedness, that in another character, might pass for pride, as it makes him mix less freely in those companies, that he is unavoidably engaged in. However it has certainly this ill consequence, that it makes his virtues of less extensive influence, than they would be, if they were more generally known. He is naturally, extremely grave, and perhaps with the assistance of reason and experience, which prove the insufficiency of any pleasures or attainments, in this life, to make us happy; this seriousness is heightened so as to give himself many a gloomy moment, though other people never feel the effect of it, by any ill humour, or severity towards them. A turn of mind so superior to any of the common occurrences, or amusements of life, can seldom be much affected or enlivened by them: but as so excellent an understanding must have the truest taste for real

wit, so no one has a more lively sense of all, that is peculiarly just and delicate. These pleasures, however, are little compensations for the much more frequent disgusts, to which the same turn of mind renders him liable *. Happy, thrice happy are those humble people, whose sensations are fitted to the world they live in.

Those pleasures, which the imagination greatly heightens, it will certainly make us pay dear enough for: since the pain of parting with them, will be greatly increased, in full proportion, not to their value, but to our enjoyment. The world was intended to be just what it is; and there is no likelihood of our succeeding in the romantic scheme of raising it above what it is. To distract ourselves with a continual succession of eager hopes, and anxious fears, is a folly destructive to our nature, and to the very end of our being.

* This character of extreme delicacy and high-wrought feelings, so unfit for the common purposes of life, may perhaps remind the reader of that of Fleetwood in the Mirror.

We are formed for moderate sensations either of pain or pleasure; to feel such degrees of uneasiness only as we are very able to support: and to enjoy such a measure of happiness, as we may easily resign, nay thankfully too, when religion has opened the prospect to a brighter scene: to meet with many rubs and difficulties, which we must get over, or stumble over, as well as we can: to converse with creatures imperfect, like ourselves, and to bear with all their imperfections. It seems then, that the only way of passing through life, as we ought, is to place our minds in a state of as great tranquillity, as is consistent with our not becoming stupid.

ESSAY V.

On the Employment of Wealth.

THE advantages of frugality do not deserve to be less considered than those of generosity: for where, alas! shall bounty find its necessary fund, if thoughtless prodigality has squandered it away. When I hear of thousands, and ten thousands, spent by people, who in the midst of immense riches reduce themselves to all the shifts and pinches of a narrow fortune, I know not how to recover my astonishment at the infatuation, that leads them to annihilate such treasures: for it may really be called annihilating them, when they are spent to no one good purpose, and leave no one honourable memorial behind them. A fortune thus lavished away becomes the prey of the worthless: and is like a quantity of gold dust, dispersed uselessly in the

air, that might have been melted down, and formed into regal crowns, and monuments of glory.

I think one now scarcely ever hears an immense fortune named, but somebody adds, with a shake of the head—*It is vastly run out—He is in very narrow circumstances—They are in great straits.*—Ask the occasion, and you will find few instances of real generosity, or public spirit, or even of a well-judged magnificence: but all has gone amongst voters, fiddlers, table companions, profuse servants, dishonest stewards, and a strange rabble of people, that are every one of them the worse for it. This is pitiable: and for this, and nothing else, a man of quality is reduced to all the meannesses imaginable. He must be dependent: he must court the smiles of power: he must often be rapacious and dishonest.

I remember a friend of mine had once an excellent conceit of a cave, at the upper end of which were two enchanted glasses, with curtains drawn before them,

that were to be consulted every evening in order for the forming a judgment of the actions of the day. The first glass showed what they *might* have been, and what effects such and such opportunities ought to have produced. When the curtain was undrawn before the other, it showed, *tout au naturel*, what they *had* been. Were one to contemplate, in these glasses, on the spending one of those great estates, which reduce our fine people to such difficulties, what a coup d'œil the first would present! A wide track of country adorned and improved; a thousand honest families flourishing on their well-cultivated farms: I cannot tell whether one should not see a church or two, rising in a plain sort of majesty amidst the landscape. In another part of it, would appear manufactures encouraged, poverty relieved, and multitudes of people praying for the welfare of the happy master. His tradesmen, his domestics, every body that had any connection with him, would appear with a cheerful and a grateful air. They,

in their turns, would dispense good and happiness to all, with whom they had any concern. At the family seat, would be seen an unassuming grandeur, and an honest hospitality, free from profuseness and intemperance: one may say as of Hamlet's two pictures,

> Such should be greatness:—Now behold what follows:
> For here is fortune, like a mildew'd ear
> Blasting each wholesome grain——

In the true historical glass, what may we see? Perhaps a pack of hounds, a cellar, an election. Perhaps a gaming-table, with all those hellish faces that surround it. An artful director perhaps, and an indolent pupil. Oppression gripes every poor wretch within its grasp, and these again oppress their own inferiors and dependents: all look hopeless and joyless: and every look seems to conceal a secret murmur. On the fore-ground perhaps there stands a magnificent palace, in the Italian taste: innumerable temples, obelisks, and statues

rise among the woods: and never were Flora and Pomona, Venus and Diana, with all the train of fabulous divinities more expensively honoured in Greece and Rome, than in these fairy scenes *. The Church in the mean time, stands with a wooden tower: the fields are poorly cultivated, the neighbourhood discontented, and ever upon the catch to find all possible faults in those proud great ones, with whom they have no cheerful friendly intercourse. Fine cloathes, and costly jewels glitter, perhaps, in some part of the glass: but how can they adorn faces grown wan with inward care: or give gracefulness to those, who must always have the humbled air of inferiority, when they happen to meet the eye of their unpaid tradesmen, whose

* It might almost be supposed that Miss Talbot was here giving a real description of the beautiful seat of the late Lord Le De Spencer, at West Wycombe; but that a handsome new church there is placed on a hill, as *an object from the house*. The indignant question of Horace therefore does not apply to this case;

——————— Quare
Templa ruunt antiqua Deûm?

families are starving upon their account?

The man of thoughtless good nature, who lavishes his money to a hundred poor devils, (as is the genteel phrase to call those, that have run themselves into misery from mere worthlessness) I say, when wretches, that deserved only punishment and ignominy, have drained this generous sieve of all he had to bestow, to what grief is he exposed, when he meets with an object of real distress, one that has, perhaps, been ruined through his means, and is forced to say with the fine gentleman, in Beaumont and Fletcher,

> "I wanted whence to give it, yet his eyes
> "Spoke for him! These I could have satisfied
> "With some unfruitful sorrow"———

Would it not be quite worth while for any body to avoid such uneasinesses as these, when it can be done merely by a little thought, and a little order? Methinks an exactness of method, and a frequent review of our affairs would make every thing per-

fectly easy. Might it not be possible for a man of fortune to divide his estate into several imaginary parcels? And, appropriating each to its particular purpose, spend it, within those bounds, as freely, and with an air as open, as the thoughtless prodigal: and yet be sure, by this means, never to run out, and never to bestow upon any one article more than it deserved.

I will suppose myself at this present possessed of ten thousand a year: nor will the supposition make me at all vain, gentle reader, since it implies but the being a steward * to other people, and a slave to propriety. Oh it is ten times the more indolent thing to have but a little, and yet the same kind of management is required in all. Well: but what shall I do with this estate of mine? First of all I buy me a large and pompous account book. Then I consider how much must necessari-

* If the possession of wealth was indeed considered in this light, the owners of it might perhaps sometimes recollect that their *books* must at last be examined.—*Give an account of thy stewardship, &c.* Luke xvi. 2.

ly be employed in mere living: and I write down the sum total, on the first page. This is afterwards subdivided into its proper distinct articles: and each of them has a page allotted to itself. And here it must be observed, that there are innumerable proprieties of appearance, as indispensibly necessary to the rich man, as bare food and cloathing to the poor. The other pages of the book must each have their title at top, as thus: *Charities* 1000*l.* —*For the Service of my Friends, and of the Public*, 1000*l.*—*For proper Improvements of my Houses, Gardens, Estates*, 1000*l.* and so on. I doubt whether knick-knacks, cabinets, or any immoderate expences, in jewels, plate, or pictures*, would find a place in such a list as this.

* It should be observed that it is not the purchase of these articles that is here censured, but *immoderate* expence incurred in them. For if it be proper that the arts should be encouraged at all, it must be by the liberality of the opulent; but it by no means follows that they should so distress themselves for that purpose, as to have nothing left for more essential and necessary pursuits.

It would surely be easy, by frequently comparing the daily articles of expence under each head, with the determination marked at top, to keep every one within bounds, and to enjoy what is in our own power, without, in the least, pining after what is not: For *that* we may read the precepts of the stoics: and for the other, let us consider, a little, those instances, we may see all around us, of good characters disgraced by an ill-judged savingness in some insignificant particulars, and by a want of ease and propriety, in trifling expences.

If people have any esteem for frugality, they should try to do it honour by showing, that it is not inconsistent with a becoming and a generous spirit. I have heard very many people accused of covetousness, and generally hated, under that odious character, who perhaps had no principle of that kind, and who threw away, often, as much upon foolish expences, that had not struck them in the saving view, as they pinched out of others,

which made them look paltry and mean in the eyes of the world. Few people, I believe, are heartily covetous throughout: and this makes it so easy for them to flatter themselves, that they are not tainted at all with a vice, the very notion of which would affront them: and for those in the other extreme, they too deceive themselves, in the same sort. Whence comes the old proverb,

Penny wise and Pound foolish.

ESSAY VI.

On the Importance of Riches.

THERE are a great many things, that sound mighty well in the declamatory way, and yet have no sort of truth or justness, in them. The equality between poverty and riches, or rather, the superior advantages of the former, is a pretty philosophical paradox, that I could never comprehend. I will grant very readily, that the short sleeps of a labouring man, are full as sweet and wholesome as the slumbers indulged upon down beds, and under gilded roofs. I will readily confess, that let people have never so many apartments, they can be but in one at a time: and in a word, that the luxury and pageantry, that riches bring with them, is despicable, and infinitely less eligible, than the simplicity of plainer life. It must be

owned too, that greatness and fortune, place people in the midst of innumerable difficulties: and that they are severely accountable for all those advantages, they neglect to improve. But so, indeed a man is a more accountable creature than a hog: and yet none but a Gryllus, I believe, would prefer the situation of the latter.

I do not say, that people should upon all occasions, put themselves forward, and aspire to those dangerous heights, which perhaps, they were never formed to ascend. The fable of Phæton would be much more instructive than such a lesson as this: but I would say, and say it loudly, to all, whom Heaven has placed already in the midst of riches and honours, that they possess the highest privilege, and ought to exert themselves accordingly. These people have advantages of improving their being to the noblest purposes: and with the same degree of pains and application, that furnishes the poor artificer a daily provision for himself, and his family, they

may become a kind of beneficent angels to their fellow-creatures, and enjoy themselves, a happiness superior to all pleasure.

It is a pretty thought of Seneca, that as a merchant, whose goods are considerable, is more sensible of the blessing of a fair wind, and a safe passage, than he that has only ballast, or some coarse commodity in the vessel; so life is differently enjoyed by men, according to the different freight of their minds. Those of indigent fortunes are generally obliged to have their's too much filled, with an attention to provide the low necessaries of life. Indeed riches and greatness are as strong an obstacle as the other, to spending life in theory and speculation: but it is, however nobler, and a more delightful task to provide for the general good of multitudes, than for the subsistence of a few individuals. I speak of what riches might be; God knows, not of what they are.

The rich, the great, who act an insignificant part in life, are the most despicable

wretches of the whole creation: while the poor, the mean, the despised part of mankind, who live up to the height of their capacity and opportunities, are noble, venerable, and happy.

Is it not amazing, that creatures so fond of pre-eminence and distinction, so biassed by interest, so dazzled by fortune, as all the race of men are, should so blindly trample under foot the only true advantages of fortune? The only pre-eminence, the only honour, the highest joy, the brightest lustre, that all those gay things they pursue, could bestow upon them? Where is the beauty to be found, that will choose to waste her youth where no eye can behold her? Where is the man of wit that will sit down contented with his own admiration, and lock up his papers in a chest for his own private reading? Yet the covetous man, as far as in him lies, conceals the advantage he is fondest of, and puts himself, as much as possible, upon a level with that poverty he despises. Good Heaven! that people should not rather

choose to lay hold on every honest means, that can raise them into a kind of superior being. Who would not go through toil, and pain, and danger, to attain so glorious a pre-eminence, an honour beyond the Olympic crown of old. And yet it is but at the expence of a little openness of heart, a little thought and contrivance, a little honest generous industry in bestowing properly, that a man of rank and fortune may shine out like the sun, and see a gay world flourishing under his cheerful influence.

All these things have been said a hundred times. The miser has been painted in all his unamiable colours: and the prodigal has had his lecture too. But still, methinks, there is a great deal wanting, and I do not know how to express it. The indolent, the thoughtless people of fortune, want to be put in mind of their own importance. Some are so lazy, some so careless, and some even so humble, that they never once think of themselves as having any place to fill, or any duty to perform, beyond the immediate calls of

domestic life. Alas what a mistake is this! and what noble opportunities do they neglect!

But what must people do? They must awaken in their minds that principle of activity and industry, which is the source of every thing excellent and praise-worthy, they should exert themselves in every way, improve every occasion, employ every moment. Let the great survey the whole scene, the whole sphere of their influence, as the master-farmer, from a rising ground, overlooks the whole of his estate. The labouring hinds indeed are confined to a spot: they have their daily task appointed, and when that is done, may lay them down to sleep without a further care. But the master must wake, must consider and deliberate. This spot of ground wants better cultivation: that must be laid out to more advantage: a shade would be becoming here: in yonder place I mean to lead the little rivulet, that wanders near it, to refresh those parched meadows. Those husbandmen should be encouraged: these

should be rewarded.—A word, a look, a gesture from a superior, is of importance. Thus might the rich, the great, the powerful, consider in like manner. "This part "of my fortune will be nobly employed "in relieving the miserable: that, in "works of public generosity: so much in "procuring the agreeable ornaments of "life: in this manner I may encourage "the elegant arts: by this way I may "set off my own character to the best ad-"vantage: and by making myself beloved "and respected, I shall consequently gain "an honest influence over such as may "be bettered by my good example: my "advice, my approbation will be useful in "such a case: in *this* I may do honour to "my country: in *that*"—Up and employ yourselves, you who are lolling in easy chairs, amusing away your lives over French novels, wasting your time in fruitless theory, or your fortunes in riotous excesses. Remember, you have an important part to act. It is in your own

choice whether you will be, the figure in the tapestry, the animated chair*, or flower-pot, or the hero that draws the whole attention of the theatre, and goes off with a general plaudit.

* See Spectator, No. 22.

ESSAY VII.

On Literary Composition.

WITHOUT at all pretending to criticism, it is almost impossible to read a variety of books, and not form some reflections on the variety of stile in which they are writ. One of the first and most obvious, to me, is, that the plainest and least ornamented stile is ever the most agreeable to that general taste, which is certainly the best rule, by which an author can form himself. Particular ornaments will not more please some fancies, than they will displease others. The flowery epitheted way of writing wearies the imagination, by presenting it with a multitude of wrong objects, in way of simile and illustration, before it has half informed the understanding, of what was its main purpose.

The human mind has so long a journey to take, in search of knowledge, that it grows peevish at being led out of the way,

every minute, to look at prospects, or gather daisies. The original use of epithets was to paint ideas stronger upon the mind, by a complication of little circumstances: but, I know not how, of late, they are grown into a sort of unintelligible language, that signifies nothing more to the slightly attentive reader, than, that the author has a mind to be poetical; like those Indian alphabets, which first were the plain representation of sensible objects, from thence grew into hieroglyphics, and last of all into a mere cypher.

The common sort of metaphorical epithets is very disagreeable. When we would indulge our fancies with the idea of a cool limpid running stream, to have a piece of crystal thrown across one's way is quite provoking. I remember two lines, in a very good poem, that often offended me,

——and strew
Her silver tresses, in the crystal tide.

Would not the image be more natural, and make less clatter in one's head, thus:

——and strew
Her hoary lock, wide floating o'er the stream.

Gold and Jewels do not become the Muse herself, half so well, as an elegant simplicity. But elegant it must be, and noble, or else the stile of writing degenerates into mere chit-chat conversation. Nor should a writer think it any restraint, that he is obliged to attend to the minutest strictness of grammar: since whatever serves to make his composition most clear and intelligible, contributes to the giving it the greatest beauty it can possibly have. For this reason, too long sentences, and the intricacies of parentheses ought, by all means to be avoided, however the sun-like genius of some authors, may have gilded those clouds into beauty.

This one rule of perspicuity will hold good, for all sorts of people, from those of mere business, to those of absolute speculation. The next is, that writers put no constraint upon their natural turn of mind, which will always give a truer spirit than is within the reach of any art. Yet often from an admiration of that in others, which is utterly unsuitable to themselves,

they put on a character in writing, that is mighty difficult to support throughout. The affectation of wit and humour leads into that low burlesque, which is, of all dulness, the most disagreeable. Unable to reach the true sublime, they are willing to bring it down to their own pitch. Hence spring such multitudes of travesties, parodies, and such like perversions of passages really fine: when, if they can but present you with low, and often dirty images, instead of such as are noble and beautiful, yet in such a manner, as strongly to put you in mind of the difference, all the way, they are greatly conceited of their own ingenuity. Where any of these have real humour in them, it must arise from some particular occasion; and is by no means inherent in that kind of composition *.

* Such also was the opinion of her friend Mrs. Carter, who had so great a dislike to parodies and travesties that she could rarely be persuaded to read them, and when she did, received no amusement from them. She used to say that they shewed a squint or perversion of mind in the author, which hindered him from seeing the beautiful or sublime in its true colors.

But while little wits think, that lowering and debasing the sublime, is being witty, those, who with an exalted genius, have a sportive liveliness of temper, can find means of ennobling their easiest and lightest compositions. Of all people Mr. Prior has succeeded the best in this way, if he had not, now and then, allowed his pen too much license for the demureness of the Muse. As Homer's dreams were the dreams of Jupiter, so Prior's gaieties are the sportings of Apollo: and where he introduces his fabled deities, in a mirthful scene, it is not by depressing them to the level of merry mortals, but by employing (to use the phrase of an excellent modern author) "a new species of the sublime "that has, hitherto, received no name."

There is a celebrated passage in Longinus, in which he prefers, upon the whole, a mixture of striking faults and beauties, to the flat correctness of an uncensurable, laboured author. One of the books, which to those, who for want of translations can know little of Isocrates and Demosthenes,

has most convincingly proved the justness of this determination, is Dr. Barrow's Sermons, who seems most exactly to answer what Longinus says of the irresistible Greek orator. His expressions are frequently singular, and though crouded together, are so poured out from the abundance of one of the best hearts, that the finest turned periods are insipid in comparison. His genius too, whatever were the littlenesses of language, in those days, was certainly poetical and noble: and his imagination so warmed and delighted with the fairest view of every thing in the scheme of Providence, that religion wears, through every page of his, its proper grace.

ESSAY VIII.

On Prior's Henry and Emma.

TO enliven an airing, the other morning, Prior's Henry and Emma was read aloud to the company: and the different sentiments they exprest, upon it, determined me, to put down my own upon paper, as that Poem has always been a favourite with me, and yet wants, I think, a good deal of explanation, and excuse.

The Tale is introduced, in a way so much more interesting, than one commonly meets with, in pastoral dialogues; with circumstances of such tenderness and delicacy, and images so smiling and engaging, that one is concerned, before his characters have said a word, to have them keep up to the ideas, which partial imagination has formed of each. That of Emma is distinguished by something so peculiarly mild

and affectionate, that if we do not attend to this, as her chief characteristic, we shall be apt to be surprised at many of her most beautiful sentiments, as too different from the common ways of thinking on such occasions.

Emma susceptible of soft impressions, beyond what were to be wished in a character, where it set up for a general pattern, her soul entirely turned to those tender attachments, that are not inconsistent with strict virtue, had long been wooed with every irresistible art by an accomplished youth, whose virtues and excellencies could not but discover themselves, in such a space of time, on a thousand occasions. By the characters given on each side, their passion seems to have been grounded on a just esteem: and the known truth, and goodness of Henry, had produced in her mind, such an unlimited confidence, that it was impossible she could suspect him of any crime. To try her constancy, he accuses himself, in the harshest terms, as a murderer: but it was

easy for Emma's heart to furnish him with sufficient excuses. The wild unsettled state of the island, in those early times, torn by so many, and so fierce factions, involved the young and brave, in perpetual bloodshed. What was called valour in one party, would, in the other, be branded as murder. In those days, the vast forests were filled with generous outlaws: and the brave mixt with the vile, from a likeness of fortune, not of crimes *.

I have dwelt upon this, because, at first reading, it offended me to imagine, that Emma should be so unmoved with a supposition of her lover's guilt, and continue her affection, when she must have lost her esteem. That point, I think, is now cleared up: but I am extremely sorry, that to

* An ingenious conjecture of Dr. Whitaker, that Henry Clifford, first Earl of Cumberland, was the hero of "the Nut-brown Maid," cannot be supported, because that Ballad was printed in 1502, when Henry Clifford was only nine years of age. There is however some reason to suppose that his father Henry, Lord Clifford, might be the Poet's Henry. For this curious and interesting enquiry, see Censura Literaria, Vol. VII. Article XX.

prevent all scandal, Prior did not alter a few lines, in the answer she makes him, to his open declaration of inconstancy. In spite of all prejudice, there is certainly a want of all spirit and delicacy in it. If what he told her was fact, he could not be faultless, nor could her affection continue to be innocent. The same mild benevolence to her rival, might surely have been exprest without the extravagance of desiring to attend them as a servant. Permit me to insert the alteration here.

" Go then, while I, in hopeless absence prove
" By what I shall endure, how much I love."
This potent beauty, this triumphant fair,
This happy object of our different care,
Her shall my thoughts, thro' various life attend,
With all the kindness of the fondest friend:
Lov'd for thy sake, howe'er her haughty scorn
May triumph o'er me as a thing forlorn;
For her my warmest wishes shall be made,
And Heav'n implor'd for blessings on her head.
O may she never feel a pain, like mine!
Never—for then a double guilt were thine.
Here must I stay: like thought, were actions free
No wrongs, no hardships should divorce from thee
Thy Emma,—not a rival's company.

But wandering thoughts, and anxious cares are now
All that a rigid virtue will allow.
Go happy then, forget the wretch you leave,
Nor for a woman's weakness vainly grieve.
Thy fate decreed thee false: the same decree
Entail'd a hopeless constancy on me.

The few following lines, in the same speech, are so easily adapted to these, that the change in them, is not worth mentioning.

There is something infinitely beautiful in all the tender passages of this Poet. He has the art of representing all the softness of the passion, without any of its madness. Other writers raise their expressions, with such hyperboles, as are a profanation of much nobler sentiments. Methinks softness and tenderness are the only characteristics of a mortal love. The strains of adoration ill become Anacreon's lyre: and are ill addrest to human imperfection. Those imagined everlasting attachments, that rebel against mortality; those infinite ideas, that grasp at all excellence, in one finite object, are fatal ab-

surdities, that have both their guilt and punishment.

This kind of sentiment is quite unnecessary: we may survey those we love, surrounded with all the frailties and imperfections of human nature, and yet be partial to these imperfections, as we are to our own. Pity does but endear the tender tie, where it is not incompatible with esteem. The pleasures of giving and receiving from the dear object of affection, mutual protection, comfort and relief, are the joys that we are formed most sensible of, as such a disposition was, in our present situation, most necessary for the preservation, and happiness of society.

The expressions of this kind of sentiment are, on the other hand, as offensively misused, when applied to sacred subjects, as they too often are by the soft enthusiasm of constitutional Pietists *. Of human

* Surely this opinion ought to have much weight, when proceeding from a writer of such uniform and acknowledged piety: and they who talk of loving their Saviour, in such terms as they would use concerning their fellow-creatures, would do well to consider it.

love, kindness, compassion, mutual care, mutual assistance, mutual forgiveness of a thousand little blemishes and errors, are necessary ingredients, have their merit, and their reward. All that refined caprice, that shows its kindness, like Alicia in Jane Shore,

> "In everlasting wailings and complainings,"

is as contrary to this system, as it is to the happiness of whoever is honoured by its persecution; and proceeds from a failure, in point of confidence, which, when once the honour of a character, justly esteemed worthy, is seriously engaged, should remain unshaken as a rock. This is prettily exprest, by Prior's Celia,

> Reading thy verse, who heeds said I,
> If here, or there, his glances flew
> O free for ever be his eye,
> Whose heart to me is ever true.

Another great, as great a contradiction to the amiable kind of temper, that Prior

describes, is that violent detestation upon even just cause of offence, which so much too often verifies the poet's expression,

> Heaven has no curse, like love to hatred turn'd,
> Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd.

The hatred of anger can justly proceed only from injury. Real, premeditated injury can proceed from no such character, as could ever be the object of a well placed love; and therefore, in this last, the injury retaliates on a person's own mistaken choice: who has therefore no more reason to be angry with the other, for not acting up to an ideal perfection, than to be displeased at any other instance of wrong behaviour in those, who never were the objects of any just partiality.

But if the character be mixt, faulty indeed, but not totally bad, pity methinks should gladly take hold on the occasion, and banish, at once, all bitterness of resentment. Religion itself forbids the spirit of uncharitable anger and revenge.

When there has ever been a real affection *, it can never, I fancy, be so rooted out, as to give place to those hateful emotions.

Whoever then yield up their minds to these excesses, must confess their former partiality to have been founded merely in pride, vanity, and selfishness; for kindness and benevolence will never cease to exist, whilst their objects remain, in any degree unchanged. If those objects were only our dear selves, every disappointment of our pride, interest, and vanity, will wound us to the heart. But if our thoughts had a more generous aim, if the happiness of one dearer than ourselves, was the center of our wishes, we shall joyfully acquiesce in any means, by which that happiness may be attained, laying ourselves entirely out of the case: and should the injury to us, be ever so grievous, we shall only wish for them, with the same disinterested ar-

* If Miss Talbot be right this may be the proof of the reality of the affection; but it is a proof which cannot be given, till the affection has been shewn to be misplaced by the injury suffered.

dour, Aristides did for the Athenians, who had banished him, that the time may never come, when they shall repent it *.

* It may perhaps admit of a doubt whether such perfection of disinterested attachment be ever really felt, and still subsist after the circumstances that caused it have ceased to exist. Possibly the feeling in Aristides' heart, very contrary to his words, might be the hope that a time would come when the Athenians should repent of their conduct.

ESSAY IX.

On the Separation of Friends by Death.

I KNOW nothing more common, and almost unavoidable, than the disposition of censuring those manners and inclinations in others, which we are sensible would, in our own tempers, be faulty, or which lie cross to the bent of our natural humours. Yet I am persuaded, in many of these instances, were we to make but common allowances for the difference of constitution, of situation, of knowledge, and of perception, we should find, according to a good-natured French saying, that *tout le monde a raison.*

That tenderness, which we feel for a true friend is, in some minds, so inseparably blended with every idea, that the dearer half of every enjoyment is liable to be torn away at once, and the stroke of a

moment shall cast its gloom over the longest years of life. Kindness and gratitude, the very laws of constancy, and the frame of human nature, seem to exact of us this melancholy return, for all that refined and superior happiness, which in such an union, we have enjoyed.

I cannot help imagining, however, that there may be a good deal of reason on the contrary side: and as one never is so sensible of the force of reason, as when it is heightened by the eloquence of some present feeling; so this came most strongly into my head, during some solitary hours of illness, that very lately put me in mind of such an eternal separation from my friends. The enjoyments of life, are what, I believe, all persons of serious thought, would easily resign for themselves, when they are sure, at the same time, to be freed from its disquiets. But, to think that we may carry away with us, into the grave, all the joy and satisfaction of those, to whom we ever wish the most; and leave them behind us, in a world where every

support is wanting, entirely destitute of any (of any such, I mean, as the ordinary methods of Providence have appointed) is the only reflection, which, at such a moment, can disturb the composure of an innocent and religious mind.

I do not know how far the pride of giving pain may extend, in some people, but for myself I protest, that as earnestly as I wish to be remembered with a kind esteem, I could not bear the thought of that remembrance being a painful one. For this reason, I was summoning up, in my mind, all that might be alledged, for what I used to call lightness of temper, and found it much more, than I had imagined.

Indeed, if the persons we lament, were truly dear to us, we ought for their sakes, to restrain that immoderate sorrow, which, if they could behold it, we are sure, that it would be with the utmost concern. This however, is an argument, that will by no means hold, in all cases: but there are others more general. I will not argue that so short a life, as ours, seems to con-

tradict the idea of eternal attachments: because I cannot help flattering myself that they may be continued, and improved through every state of being *. But that they ought to be so moderated, as to contradict no purpose of the state, we are at present placed in, is a truth, that will scarcely be denied. The inferiority of our station, the frailty and imperfection of our nature, make submission to unerring wisdom, one of our first duties: and how do we set ourselves up, in opposition to it, when upon withdrawing any one blessing, however kindly to us, we stubbornly determine to shut our minds against every other, which it indulgently continues!

Yet after all these considerations, the characters of Arachne and Maria still surpass me, though they no longer give me disgust they used to do. To hear them talk, with the greatest good nature of any present object of compassion, otherwise

* Mrs. Carter seems to have been of the same opinion.—See the Memoirs of her Life, First Edition, page 473.

ever so indifferent to them: to see how really they are affected by every little instance of kindness, and how happy they are in every trifling amusement, one would imagine them extremely susceptible of impressions. But then, in the midst of a gay conversation, to hear them run over, without the least emotion, a long list of once intimate friends, and then go on as earnestly about trifles, as if such people had never been.—It is impossible not to wonder at their happy constitutions, and eternal flow of spirits. When I tell you, I really esteem these women, shall I be reckoned severe, if I say they are ingenious, without parts, and good humoured, without sentiments?

Theagenes is scarcely less happy, in his frame of mind, but more so, in his strength of reason. His genius is the most extensive, his imagination the most flowery that can be: and these supply perpetual employments for his mind, diverting it from too deep an attention to melancholy sub-

jects. His temper is really generous and benevolent: this makes him interested in every body's welfare, that comes within his reach: and such an activity of mind is the surest food of cheerfulness. As some people are peculiarly turned to amuse themselves with the oddnesses and deformities of natures, Theagenes has an eye for its beauties only. His speculations wander over the great objects of the universe, and find something curious, in the detail even of mechanic arts. In characters, he often errs on the favourable side; and by this means, sometimes loses too much, the distinction of different kinds of merit, and subjects himself to a friendly laugh. As he looks upon the world with a philosophic, and a grateful eye, he can find something endearing, in whatever part of it he is placed; like a strong plant that will take root and flourish, in every soil. When one set of acqnaintance is swept away, by time, his social temper unites itself with the next, he falls into; and is

to be considered in this view, like a drop of water, which, though separated from its native stream, yet naturally blends with any other mass of the same element, while disunited it would lose its use, and its very being.

ESSAY X.

On Self-Love.

IT is a reigning maxim, through all the works of Epictetus*, that every body may be happy if they please: and the desire of being happy, is but in other words, the definition of such a virtuous and reasonable self-love, as was originally implanted in us, by the author of our nature, for innumerable wise and gracious purposes. No part of our constitution was given us, without important reason: and therefore it were folly to suppose this of so essential a one as self-love: but how often it errs, in its aim, and in its degree, there needs no instance to prove; nor that when it

* This Essay therefore must have been written after the year 1752, in which Mrs. Carter finished her translation of the works of that Philosopher, which she sent to her friend in manuscript.—See her Memoirs, p. 119, 1st. edition.

does so, it is of all other principles the most mischievous, as it is ever the most active.

Violent declamations, either for, or against any thing of the great frame of nature, serve but to shew an injudicious eloquence, which by proving too much, in effect proves absolutely nothing. Even passion may be improved into merit *: and virtues themselves may deviate into blameable errors. Unbiassed reason, if such a thing there be, in this mixt state of human nature, surveys both sides at once, and teaches us to moderate our opinions, to draw the proper advantages, from every circumstance, and carefully to guard against all its dangers.

The same principle of self-love, that

* In passion itself, abstractedly considered, is neither merit nor demerit. It is either the reward of virtue from the delight which attends the practice of it, or else it is the means to an end. If regulated by duty and principle, it leads to good, and to the enjoyment of the gratifying feelings resulting from it; if improperly indulged, it becomes the handmaid to every vice the inlet to every misery.

adds new fire and strength to every passion, when the loose reign is given up to fancy, at other times checks our indulgence of those passions, and pursuits, by making us reflect on the danger, and pain, that attends them. The same tie, that so closely binds us down to our own interest, makes us sympathize, in the fortunes of our fellow-creatures. By self-love we learn to pity in others, what we dread, or fear for ourselves. In this balance we weigh their distresses with our own: and what self-love has shown us, under the name of such, to ourselves, we shall always suppose the same to every one else, and kindly commiserate the sorrows we have felt.

Self-love endears virtue to us, by the tenderness it gives us, for whatever degree of it we perceive in ourselves: and in the same way, makes us look with a peculiar charity on those, whose faults are of the same kind with ours. Every body has, I believe, a favourite virtue, and a favoured weakness, which being first used

to in themselves, they are sure to give quarter and applause to, in every one else. By this partiality, particular friendships are generally determined.

There is a lower degree of it, which would be quite ridiculous, if that too had not its valuable use in connecting human kind together. As we grow any way acquainted with people, though sometimes it is only by character, sometimes even by some circumstance of no more signification, than having sat at the same table: received, or payed some trifling mark of civility, nay even having it to say, that we have seen them, we assume a kind of property in them. Such is the importance, which the least connexion, with our dear selves, can give to whatever we please, that if we have seen people, but one single time, it makes often a wide difference in our way of attending to what is said about them. Recollect but any conversation you have been in, where persons though of very little consequence, have been talked of, and I dare say you may remember,

that two or three of the company, immediately fell to recollecting such idle circumstances in their knowledge of them, as could receive no value, but from that knowledge itself.

This disposition, I think, shows how much we were intended to mix in life: and it must be a strong reason, that will draw the same advantages for practice, from the enlarged views, given by reading and speculation, which even the commonest understandings are fitted to receive, from their natural constitution. If these are neglected, we fall into a thousand faults, of which every one carries its own punishment along with it. People who confine themselves strictly to a small circle of acquaintance, are in great danger of contracting a narrowness of mind: while those, who enter freely into society, gain by it such an ease, and openness of temper, as makes them look upon every interest and pleasure, to be in some degree, their own.

The great, who live immured, as it were,

within the inclosures of their vast possessions, look upon those of a lower rank, as inhabitants of a distant world from themselves. If ever they have any thing to do with them, it is matter of constraint and uneasiness, and therefore can never be done with a good grace. Their sentiments and amusements, are something delicate and mysterious, that the vulgar are not supposed capable of apprehending, but are to be kept at an awful distance, which, if ever they leave, it is insufferable intrusion.

All distinct sets of people are apt to consider themselves as separate from the rest of mankind. Hence the perpetual enmities and prejudices of different professions: hence the continual opposition of parties, sects, and ages: hence the general censures, thrown at random, on all. When once what we have censured and laughed at, comes to be our own case, we learn to make those reasonable allowances, that, before, we never so much as thought of.

A beauty, that has been severely used by the small-pox, learns to esteem people, for something more than the person. A misrepresented character can allow a great deal for the uncharitableness of people's opinions, and think mildly of a blemished one. The age, which at fifteen, seemed almost antediluvian, grows strangely supportable, as we approach it: and Lysis, in an airy dress, no longer ridicules people that go without hoods, after thirty. —I grow trifling. This subject of self-love, affords matter of serious reflection and gratitude. It is surely one of the greatest marks of infinite wisdom, that what, at first sight, may seem only to regard ourselves, is one of the strongest ties to social virtue: and that the very attention to others, which should seem most contrary to our first notions of self-love, is, indeed, the truest support, and most rational pursuit of it, and which alone can preserve it from degenerating into miserable weakness and folly.

Man, like the generous vine, supported lives,
The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.
On their own axis, as the planets run,
Yet make at once, their circle round the sun.
So two consistent motions act the soul,
And one regards itself, and one the whole.
  Thus God and nature link'd the general frame,
And bad self-love, and social be the same.

POPE.

ESSAY XI.

On the Principle of Self-interest as applied to Education.

I WAS making a visit the other day, to people, that pass for what are called your very sensible clever folks. They have a large family of children, of whom they seem fond without indulgence: *and to be sure they educate them mighty well.* Who is more capable of doing it? They are prudent, have good sense, and know a great deal of the world: but alas, it is this knowledge of the world, as they call it, that spoils every thing. "Come hi-"ther, my dear," (said the lady of the house to a little girl about five years old, who was crying to go out of the room almost as soon as she came in) "come hi-"ther Lucy. Look ye my dear, if you

" will behave yourself prettily, and go and " talk to all the company, papa will give " you a fine new doll to-morrow."—This you may be sure, stopt the crying for the present. But what will be the effect of it? Every time Miss Lucy wants a new plaything, she has only to misbehave herself, and she is sure of being bribed into good humour again. Thus by an excess of good management in her mama, the little gipsy will be taught to be artful and peevish, at an age, whose greatest ornament is innocence and good humour.

Two or three instances more, of the same kind of prudence, had quite awakened my sincerity, and I could not forbear speaking of it, with the freedom of an old acquaintance, as soon as the more formal part of the circle was dispersed. " My dear," (replied Prudentia, with a compassionate kind of smile) " you have lived " in the clouds, all your days, and I am sorry " to see you are not out of them yet. For " my part, who have long been sensible, " that it is upon this earth, and not up in

" the air, that I am to act my part in life,
" I confess, nothing seems more natural
" to me, than that children should be
" taught to follow the same motive, by
" which they are sure to be actuated all the
" rest of their lives."—Can you possibly mean so low a motive as interest? said I.—
" I certainly do. For as low as you think it,
" you must be sensible, if you reflect a mo-
" ment, that it is what we all of us pursue.
" Those, who give up their happiness, in
" the present state, with the most disin-
" terested air, do it only to intitle them-
" selves to the blessings of a future one."

Supposing that this was the case, interrupted I, the nature of the rewards, in these two instances, is so very different, that it would hinder you from drawing any inferences from them, in favour of your own scheme. If the greatness, or gaieties of this world were to be our recompence, I should think, that to reward a child with a doll, or a hobby-horse, were framing its mind to proper expectations and desires but—will you let me talk a little upon sub-

jects, that are certainly above my reach?—O by all means, answered Prudentia, Clemene was not to call upon me till eight, and I shall be mighty glad to hear your romance of education, in the mean time. I dare say it will be pretty: but you will find it a mere romance, I am persuaded, ten years hence, when you have a family of your own.—Well, be that as it will: you have given me leave to talk, and this is all I have to do at present.

I was going to say, continued I, that I cannot help imagining, that a great part of our happiness, in a future state, may arise from a sense of *right*, abstractedly from all other considerations. That, at least, as much of it will proceed from the thought, of having acted agreeably to the infallible will of the most perfect of beings, as from that of having deserved the favour of the lord of the universe, and from the hopes of any happiness, which infinite goodness and power may bestow on us. In short it seems to me, as if to contribute, each in our inferior way, to the order and

beauty of the universe, was at once the noblest, and the justest motive, and the highest reward of goodness.

" Lucia is not old enough to enter into " all these abstracted reasonings," said Prudentia. " In our world, we must treat " children, as children, and convince " them by their senses, in default of their " judgments. I do not know what people " may do in Fairy land. I suppose, if you " had a son you would expect, he should " be divinity professor at five years old: " but I am afraid, Lucy would not be " at all a fit wife for him."

Look ye, said I, you shall not laugh me out of my argument: and so arm yourself with patience, and hear me out. Your supposition is an excellent good one: but I am afraid, I shall be less mistaken, in supposing, that a child, who has been taught no other end in behaving itself well, than the gaining some favourite point, or some darling toy, will never make a disinterested minister, will never regard the reality of virtue, and will be ready to throw off

even the appearance of it, when it is contradictory to interest.

"But must one never give a poor child "any encouragement then?" cried Prudentia.

You mistake me entirely, said I, let good behaviour be always attended by reward; but you make it the consequence of bad behaviour. As for the particular rewards of toys and sugar-plumbs, I confess myself, in general, no great friend to them. The approbation of friends is a better incentive to act right; and gives, even to such children, a pleasure of a much higher kind. These should be mixed, however, in a proper degree: and certainly even the last ought not to be too much insisted on. The notion of doing right, for the sake of doing right, should be gently inculcated, and strengthened by degrees, as they advance in age, and understanding. This will settle, in time, into a firm and stedfast rightness of mind, which interest shall never bias, which adversity shall never shake, which prosperity shall never

enervate. From hence will proceed a calm and even cheerfulness of temper, a regular and uniform conduct, that shall make them for ever happy in themselves, and respected by others. Not the wild gaiety of one hour, damped by uneasy reflections, the next: not a perpetual dispute, between reason and passion, which makes people good by fits and starts only. Miserable is the state of these: and yet perhaps it is almost always the effect of their not knowing, from the first, what end to aim at. Interest and ambition attract them, by a thousand glittering temptations: and yet, in spite of all these, in the midst of their pursuit, they feel themselves often checked by the secret monitor in the heart, who tells them, we were formed for something nobler than greatness, and that, neither riches nor pleasures are the chief end of life.

But what is this nobler end? Perhaps it is the applause of men, the immortality, which fame bestows, or at least, the pleasure of being well looked on, and esteemed

by the people among whom we live.—Fatal imagination! Source of wild and mischievous exploits, of wars and desolations: and, in less noble minds, the origin of hypocrisy, and ever hateful deceit. To look upon the respect and admiration of men, as the ultimate end of life, is, perhaps, one of the most dangerous errors, into which we can fall. While it is the perfection of a character to pay a proper regard to it, to rejoice in it as the amiable attendant of real virtue: but to be willing to sacrifice the fairest appearance, to what is really right: and bear the contempt of mankind, rather than not deserve their esteem.

ESSAY XII.

On the Distinction between Cunning and Prudence.

LORD BACON has an Essay upon cunning, that if it falls into wrong hands, is more likely to teach people sleights and devices, than to furnish a warning against them *. And yet the Essay is, in itself, excellent; but methinks it were time well bestowed to make a just distinction between cunning and prudence, a blameable artfulness, and a laudable dexterity. To fix the bounds of these two borderers and determine the nice difference,

> " Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice."

To exercise the authority of superior reason and understanding, to make use of

* Swift's advice to servants is liable to the same objection.

their lawful advantages, can surely be no fault. On the contrary, it is making the best of our nature, and employing faculties that were not intended to lie idle. It is by reason and understanding, that human kind are superior to brutes of infinitely greater strength and force of body, and the same sort of difference subsists among men. A brutal *nature* is to be considered in the same light, whether the animal, it governs, go upon two legs or four, only in our behaviour towards the brutes of our own kind, we have this additional consideration, that there is, at the same time, a mixture of something divine and excellent in every human soul, which claims strongly our assistance, in subduing that worse half, so prevalent in the many. Thus, those who by wisdom lead others less wise, to act wisely, not only make them, as inferior natures, subservient to excellent purposes, but at the same time, do them a real and important good, and raise them above what they were. When, by innocent arts, we soothe an uneasy temper:

when, by suspending the impetuosity of a person's passion, we give him leisure to recall his reason, we do but free him from the worst of tyrants, and defend the good and reasonable man, within him, from the hasty influence of the madman.

But to do evil, that good may come of it, nothing can ever make allowable *. The moment we deviate from truth and integrity, our very best intentions are all poisoned and perverted.

To learn what we can, by an acute observation of the countenances and manners of those with whom we are concerned, is certainly a very blameless point of wisdom. To pry into their secret thoughts, uninterested, and only to betray them, is the baseness of hearkening at doors, and looking in at windows.

* So also thought St. Paul; but some modern moral Philosophers have been of a different opinion, and by stating extreme cases, and arguing from supposed circumstances which never have existed, and probably never can take place, have strangely confounded right and wrong, and done much mischief to persons unused to metaphysical reasoning.

The cunningly preventing objections to any thing, we have a mind should succeed, by unfairly withdrawing the attention of persons from it, can only be allowable, in cases of great exigence, or in absolute trifles. Mere humour is a thing, that we are at liberty to controul and guide, in what way we please: but when the case is of importance, we are scarcely fit judges, if it touches ourselves, whether we are at liberty to deceive another, to what, we may think, ever so good an end. If it is a person, over whom we have any authority, the case is somewhat clearer. Madness and folly we have a right to govern, founded in the utter incapacity of those, who are thus governed: and the point is indisputable, that children may be cheated into health, with a sugared portion; and that to steal away the sword of a distracted person, or humour his frenzy, till we have secured him, is no theft or deceit.

But to surprize any person's reason is utterly unjustifiable: and be the end we propose ever so good, the means is most

detestable. If people will not make a right use of leisure and reflection, their fault is great: but if we do not allow them both, ours is much greater.

All hypocrisy is hateful and despicable: but there certainly are infinite cases, where others have no right to know our private thoughts and resolutions. Reserve is always allowable. Where we go a step farther, it is accompanied with a kind of shame that is sufficient to instruct us. Yet sometimes, to be sure, we may put on an appearance of something better than we are, as showing a disdain of our present imperfections, and provided we put this on, with a real intention and aim of rising to the mark we have set. But any appearance *contrary* to what we are in our hearts and wishes, is vile.

Once again: people's humours we may, nay ought to soothe and wind, and govern, as we best can: for humour is the childishness of the mind: reason its maturity, and children ought to submit to the direction of grown persons. These are the little

arts that humanize society, and give it a pleasing and a gentle air. But to work upon people's weaknesses, to take advantage of their simplicity, to side with their passions, for our own purposes—this is that monstrous policy, which is the wisdom of this world, and the foolishness of a better.

To introduce any perplexing subject in the easiest manner, provided our intention be a good one, is but using fit means to a laudable end. But let all have a care how they grow too fond of their own ingenuity and dexterity, in managing even laudable undertakings: the step is too easy to a low sort of cunning, that is as far from the true sublime of virtue, as any species of false wit is from the true sublime in writing.

Most comedies are very pernicious in this way. They turn upon a thousand little stratagems and intrigues, that even when they are innocent tend strangely to corrupt the amiable simplicity of an honest mind.

True taste in every thing is plainness and simplicity, the least deviation from nature that is possible; for that is very consistent with the highest improvement of it. Buildings, gardens, statues, pictures, writings of all sorts, come within this rule, and it holds full as strongly in character and behaviour. It is the saying of a very excellent author, that the true art of conversation, if any body can hit it, seems to be this, an appearing freedom and openness, with a resolute reservedness as little appearing as is possible. I stumbled at it at first: but upon consideration I must suppose him, and from what goes before it seems most probable, to mean by reservedness, a strict watch over ourselves, not to be led into saying any thing improper, or that can be of the least harm to others, and this may most allowably be tempered with such a winning carriage, and so easy a good humour, as shall take off from the height of virtue and discretion all appearance of stiffness and moroseness.

To insinuate instruction in a pleasing

way, to introduce useful subjects by unaffected transitions, and to adorn truth with a mixture of pleasing fictions, is the highest merit of conversation, and has nothing to do with cunning*. To watch for a favourable opportunity of doing people good, or reclaiming them from some error——who ever complained of being so over-reached?

* Witness those most perfect models of all improving conversation; the discourses and parables of Jesus Christ.

ESSAY XIII.

On the Necessity of encouraging Hope.

I DO not know whether it is a pragmatical disposition, or whether it is the effect of a happy inclination to hope, in spite of all discouragements; but for my part, I cannot abide to hear people in a desponding way, give up every attempt in which they cannot thoroughly succeed. It is, generally too, the best and wisest sort of people, and who would therefore be the most likely to succeed in some degree, that by carrying their wishes of success too far, and finding it impossible to attain them, in their full extent, sit down in a useless despair and moralize upon the world: which, because it is too bad to be completely reformed by them, they disdain to mend as far as they might.

Thus the best and most useful designs are the soonest discouraged, while those of the

wicked and the trifling are pursued day after day: the one too violent to be checked by any consideration, that would oppose the ruling passion: the others too thoughtless to attend to any difficulties, are continually weaving one web after another out of their idle imaginations, forgetful of all that have been brushed away, and thinking themselves well rewarded, if they can catch a few worthless flies, the vanities and amusements of life *.

There is something quite grievous in this to a mind full of spirit and activity, that thinks it glorious, at least to struggle in the cause of virtue, though ever so sure to be overpowered. But this is by no means the case: every effort does something, whether enough to be perceived, at the moment, or not, is very little material: since in time it will certainly have its due effect, and whether that be soon enough for our pride to be flattered by it, or not,

* The allegory in this passage may perhaps remind the reader of the 4th stanza of Gray's beautiful Ode on the Spring, written in 1742, but not published till 1753.

is a consideration, which truly generous minds should overlook. They will, indeed, go on with less alacrity and satisfaction; but ease and pleasure are, at best, but the secondary ends of our being, in such a state of trial as this life. If, therefore, we do but our duty here, we may trust our reward to futurity: and we should never urge the difficulties we meet with, as any objection to the main business of our life, which would by no means be free from uneasiness, even should we neglect our duty.

But, after all, what are these so terrible difficulties of which people so heavily complain? Ours is not, with all its faults, an age, or country of persecution or tyranny: people's lives and fortunes are secure: their virtues involve them in no danger, and though very possibly they may hinder them from rising in the world, yet though ever so openly and strenuously persisted in, they can do them no great damage. The utmost they can suffer is a little contradiction, a little chagrin, the vexation of seeing

many good endeavours turn out to but little good purpose, the uneasiness of living amongst a mixture of people little suited to their better turn of mind, and to whom they cannot do so much good, as they would. But is this a reason why they should choose to do none at all? Will the world be the better for all the good people, that are in it, running to hide themselves in deserts and solitudes? If it is not, what then is the sudden retirement, but an idle and selfish pursuit of their own indolent inclinations? Does the industrious planter forbear his toil, because he expects not to enjoy the shade of those flourishing oaks, that will spring from his acorns? Is he discouraged by the fear, or frequency of blights? Does he at once declare that all the young trees are degenerate, and no good to be hoped from them? The worse the world is, the more need it has of good people's trying to mend it: and should they be ever so unsuccessful, in regard to themselves, at least, they have not lost their pains. Meanly indeed do they be-

tray the cause of virtue, if they, its only friends, suffer themselves to be overcome by so weak enemies as spleen and indolence. Of all people they have the least cause to despond: they, who pursue the noblest end, by the fairest means, they who are sure of being in the right, they who are sure to have the best applause for it, they who can doubt of nothing, but that their present fancy may not be gratified in seeing an immediate success of their endeavours: and this they need not doubt about neither, since they ought not to think of it at all.

If sometimes such a glorious instance of success appears, this ought no more to mislead their hopes, than the notion of a magical wand, that raises places and gardens in an instant, should make people disdain to cultivate their country, by the slow and vulgar methods of planting and building. Inconveniences that cannot be removed may be palliated at least. The first who formed habitations to defend them from the cold were certainly much

wiser than if they had sat down and piteously lamented those inclemencies of the weather, which none of their complaints could alter, but against which their industry could easily secure them.

From this restless activity in the mind of man, this busy hope for ever springing up in his heart, this notion of bettering every situation, and never resting contented while he can aspire to any thing further, all those improvements, which form half the enjoyment of civil life, have arisen. But with them many errors have shot forward too; and if the more delicate flowers of virtue should be left to sicken and decay in their offensive shade, the world will soon be over-run with the most noxious weeds.

ESSAY XIV.

On the moral Uses of Geography.

AMONG those studies, which are usually recommended to young people, there are few that might be improved to better uses than Geography. I mean by this, indeed, not a bare acquaintance with the outlines of a map, but some general knowledge of the people who inhabit this our globe: not their situation only, but their history and manners. It may perhaps be objected, that the title, which I have given to this study, belongs to a subject much more bounded, than the definition, which I have since been making of it: but I think it may very well include a general knowledge of history, as extended to all parts of the habitable globe, though a more particular application to the histories of those few people, who have made them-

selves very remarkable on it, may belong to a different science.

It is not only the error of the peasant boy, who imagines there is no habitable land, beyond those mountains, that inclose his native valley, but of many more, that we have to guard against, and of much more important tendency. How the idea of greatness and superiority vanish in a moment, at the unrolling a large map of the world, where we see England itself, make so inconsiderable a figure! Let our thoughts be never so strongly attached to any particular place, in this inconsiderable spot, it must give us a moment's reflection, upon the insignificance of all those cares, that center in so imperceptible a point*! Innumerable interruptions indeed, trifling and vexatious, will often happen to call down our most exalted thoughts, but for that very reason, we have the more need of returning to them

* The classical reader will recollect that Socrates endeavoured to check the early vanity of Alcibiades by this very means.

often: and not only taking a transient view of them in our minds, as shadows passing before a looking-glass *; but trying to fix them there, by reducing them to something solid, and ever drawing some practical precept from them, that may remain in our hearts, to whatever trifles imagination is hurried away, by the various avocations of life.

Considered as a part of space, the spot, each of us, takes up, is indeed very insignificant: but nothing is so as relating to the internal system of the universe: and therefore properly to fill the station, there assigned us, deserves an equal degree of care in persons of every rank, and is not to be measured by the acres they possess.

This sort of consideration restores a higher value to the elevated circumstances of life, than the former has robbed them of, in the low notion of intrinsic value.

* In how many places does Miss Talbot's intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures discover itself, even perhaps without any consciousness of it in her own mind! See St. James i. 23, and 24.

This should teach the miser, to esteem his riches, rather by the treasure spent, than by his secret hoard: it should teach every body in general, from the day-labourer to the king, by every possible means to raise themselves, in the moral world, to a degree of consideration, that their place in the natural world can never attain.

Could we, (it is a strange wild fancy) imagine to ourselves a map delineated of this, as well as of the other, we should see then, that those vast continents which overspread the one, would be reduced, upon the other, to moderate bounds: while the smallest civilized tracts of land became extensive empires, in proportion to the improvements they have made, in religious virtue and knowledge. This, after all, is the map of real consequence, and which will remain with indelible strokes, long after the other, when all that it relates to, is reduced to nothing.

Can any one imagine *riches* the soul of

life and source of joy? Let him but consider those vast tracts of land, where the bosom of the earth is filled with glorious gems, and glows with unnumbered mines of gold. Let him consider these countries, barbarous and wretched, ignorant of almost every useful art and speculative science; untaught both in the elegance and use of life: then let him see in some character of civilized generosity, at home, what it is, that gives all the gloss to fortune, and whence alone riches derive their lustre.

Is *power* the idol of the soul? Cast your eyes on the monarchs of Mogul, or Emperors of China. See how infinitely their grandeur, in immensity of wealth, in extent of dominion, in the adoration of their subjects, exceeds whatever greatness we are dazzled with, in those minute instances, that come within our sphere of personal knowledge. Then consider this greatness in itself: divested of all higher considerations, what is it but a wonderous

tale, to astonish foreigners *; the shining subject of a book of voyages perhaps, that will be thrown aside by the first incredulous person, as a lye, and read by the serious and the thoughtful, with such reflections, as the pride of the monarch would little approve. It must be considered too as subject to hourly revolutions: besides, that all the state of an eastern monarch is incapable of affording the least relish, to one, who has been used to the refinements of life, in more humanixed nations.

The highest gratitude must surely be raised in us, by such comparisons as these, when we reflect, that those moral and civil improvements, which seem to set our little corner of the globe, so far above the

* ——I demens et sæves curre per Alpes,
Ut pueris placeas, et declamatio fias.

JUV. SAT. X.

Thus elegantly paraphrased by Johnson in his application of the Satirist's character of Hannibal, to that of Charles XII. of Sweden.

" He left the name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

rest, that, like that mountain, which the Siamese imagine to stand on those gems, in the midst of the earth, the sun and moon, seem to have their revolutions only round that, cheering and enlightening is with their warmest beams.

Such an extensive view of human kind, as this, leads likewise to a general benevolence, dilates and enlarges the heart, as well as the imagination. Where we behold a cultivated spot of land, the eye dwells on it with pleasure: and when we see nothing but wild and barren deserts around us, we wish that they could be improved into the same smiling scene. We learn to look on the savage Indian, as our fellow-creature, who has a mind as capable of every exalted satisfaction, as ours: and therefore we pity him for the want of those enjoyments, on which we pride ourselves. From compassionate thoughts kind actions naturally flow: our endeavours will, in some degree, follow our wish, wherever it is sincere: and would we all join our endeavours to do all the good we

are able, this earth would soon become a subject of such delightful contemplation, as should make us reflect, with infinite delight, upon the study, that had first led us into so useful a train of thoughts.

ESSAY XV.

On consistency of Character.

IT is very strange, and not less grievous, that almost all people should have such an inequality in their conduct, as in ten thousand unheeded instances, daily to contradict those fundamental principles of duty and reason, which, in matters of more acknowledged importance, they justly make it their glory to act up to.

The person who goes contrary to those principles, upon deliberate reflection, we all shun and detest: and is mere heedlessness so great a virtue, as to atone for our behaving, in the same faulty way, because we do it, without making so deep reflection, as we ought?

A few instances may explain what I mean, and I believe, there are few persons,

who will not find something of the same sort, at home, within themselves.

Good nature is a quality that people are as fond of possessing as any.—Does it ever hold, throughout? That pain, which we should abhor to inflict on the body of a friend, or a dependent, do we never suffer our caprice or humour to inflict it on their *mind*, an infinitely tenderer part? —That resentment and dislike, which we are strongly upon our guard against feeling, in return for real injuries, and should justly reckon ourselves very bad Christians if we did otherwise, do we never make them the punishment of trivial offences, and slight disagreeablenesses, in those to whom, perhaps we have solid obligations? At the same time that we should desire, in cases of importance, to do all our fellow-creatures all possible good, do we seriously enough consider that the repeating an idle story, or spreading upon slight grounds, a disagreeable report, is acting most directly contrary to those laudable desires? We can *actually* do good but to few: but

we ought to wish it as sincerely and as warmly to all, as if they were truly within the small circle of our own influence: and consequently, a mind, that is as good as it should be, will feel itself heartily interested in every interest of our fellow-creatures. Should we then listen with complacency, or even with careless ears, to the story of such faults, frailties and follies, as are real misfortunes to them?

Patience and resignation are what, in the severest trials, we should earnestly wish to be distinguished for. Do we practise them on trifling occasions? Let every one of us be asked—can you bear to be put out of your own way, to accomodate your humour to the varieties of human life, and however your day is turned and interrupted, cheerfully make the best of it? Can you improve little inconveniences into something tolerable and even useful? It may generally be done if people would but set their minds to it.

You are convinced, perhaps that a cheer-

ful, grateful disposition is that, which above all others, ought to be cultivated by creatures formed for immortal happiness, guided in their way to it, by the most gracious Providence, and continually under the eye, and care of the most excellent and amiable of beings. But do you always act, and think and speak consistently with this persuasion? Is none of your breath wasted in vain sighs? Do you never voluntarily indulge the overflowings of a fruitless sorrow? Do you never, by giving way to a momentary disgust, resentment or peevishness, rob yourself of that highest delight, which flows from perfect kindness and good humour? Do you never encourage disagreeable thoughts and jarring passions to disorder the harmony of your soul, and make you tasteless to all the joys of life, and to all the charms of beautiful nature? Do you never nourish a fond and blameable anxiety—never heap times and circumstances of trouble and sorrow in your mind, till the load

grows too heavy for imagination to bear? Do you never please yourself with heightening the paintings of your distress? Do you often recollect all the happy and delightful circumstances of your situation? No state is without very many, and those very important.

Again: you are generous, it may be, free and open-hearted; your dispositions are all noble and liberal: your bounty would be inexhaustible if your estate was so: you would do good to all the world: no eye should see you, that could not "bear witness" to your kindness. But in the free indulgence of this amiable temper, how possible is it, that you may injure those whom you are the most bound to help? If proper regard to the limits of your power be not observed, this dignity and generosity must be supported by the cruellest injustice, and the most wretched condescensions. To what straits, what meannesses are those often reduced, whom fortune had once placed in a high rank!

From what proceeds this, but from inequality of conduct!

The elegant beauty, whose fondest aim is to please to and be admired, has sometimes small regard to that complete harmony of manner and behaviour, which perfects the charm. Indeed we are, all of us, so short-sighted, that to take in a whole view at once is impossible. Yet these views of life we ought surely to chuse and study, with at least as much taste and attention, as a landscape painter does prospects. The most considerable objects should take up the chief place, and be finished with the highest art. The rest should be thrown off, in due proportion, and lessening by imperceptible degress. But what a picture would he make, were the distant hills to be painted with a vivid green, and the nearest objects softened into a purplish blue: here, every flower touched up with exquisite art: and these objects as near, and more considerable, sketched only with rude out-

lines?—Inconsistent throughout, we are seriously offended at the disproportion of any work of art, and utterly insensible of it in a thousand instances, where, to the eye of reason, it is infinitely more monstrous.

ESSAY XVI.

On the Art of pleasing in Society.

ONE great reason why people succeed so little in the art of pleasing, while they seem wholly possest by the ambition of shining, is their not observing proper rules of place and time. They shine, indeed, in their own eyes extremely: but they do not suit their manners to the taste of those, with whom they converse. Whatever is their favourite and superior accomplishment, they are apt to imagine a sufficient recommendation, wherever they go; when probably there are a thousand less striking, which, properly placed, would make them appear, with infinitely more advantages. Nor is even the favourite accomplishment by this means lost; for when once you have condescended to win people's esteem,

in their own way, they are willing enough to see every additional grace in your character, and dwell upon it with pleasure.

To instance only in the character of the fine lady. Struck with the praise of beauty, and conscious of such a superior claim to admiration, the absolute fine lady will be such through every scene of life, and in every variety of circumstances. But after all what good is it to the industrious tradesman, that after many a morning's attendance, he can see her ladyship with a pair of fine eyes? It is not beauty, wit, or learning, that pass for current coin, in our dealings with people who live by their business. Punctuality and exactness, with a strict care to save them as much time and labour as we possibly can, is the least we owe them, for the pains they voluntarily take to furnish us with every convenience of life.

This is meant for a rambling sort of Essay; and now I have named punctuality, I cannot help digressing, to praise it. There

is nothing that makes us more welcome members of society. Exactness even in trifles, amounts in a long life, to a considerable sum of merit. People know how to depend upon us, and are sure, we shall never give them the least uneasiness or disappointment if we can possibly help it. This makes them the more easily bear with us, on occasions more important, where interests will sometimes very innocently interfere: and it is a piece of true policy never to forfeit that credit, in small things which we may possibly want, in great ones. There are numberless little arts of ingratiating ourselves, with our fellow-creatures, which are equally consistent with sincerity and prudence: nor was ever any thing more wise and humane than the Apostle's precept of "becoming "all things to all men." Little disobligations will be perpetually occurring, if we allow ourselves any liberty, in point of exactness; the even tenor of our conduct is broken, and people begin to think themselves indebted more to chance than to us,

for any civility or kindness we may show them.

There is a kind of shatter-witted amiable character, which gains no confidence, and loses all respect. I think, I never saw any particular description of it, and it may not be amiss to draw one here. It is a careless, gay, good humoured creature, as full of liveliness and entertainment, as void of caution and discretion, living on from moment to moment, without meaning any harm, or ever taking thorough pains to do good. In such persons, fifty good qualities are lost, in the mere hurry of inconsideration. Every thing goes on at random: every thing is unequal and odd, and yet every body loves them. Their affairs for the most part run to ruin without any extravagance: nay by starts, they will be the best managers, andthe strictest oeconomists in the world; but alas this is all the while, only whimsy masquerading in the dress of a housewife.

They who come under this description, whatever their principles may be, are

guided in all the common affairs of life by mere humour and frolick. They run, with the prettiest harmlessness in the world, into acts of injustice, that make all around them suffer severely, while they themselves are perfectly insensible whence the mischief comes, because they are conscious to their own hearts of having the best designs and sentiments imaginable. By all I could ever learn, the great and amiable Sir R. S. was one of these whimsical, unhappy mortals. With a genius and a heart, that few have ever equalled, he had this defect in conduct, to such a degree as made him, in every respect, but that of an author, as hurtful a member of society as well could be. Wit like his turned his very distresses into entertainment, and it is hard to say, whether he raised in his acquaintance, more love, diversion, or compassion. But what pity it is, that such a mind should have had any blemish at all * !

* This character of Sir Richard Steele has given much offence to some persons who think more highly

My disposition has led me a great way: but when a favourite subject is fairly thrown before one, who can resist it? Not gravity and decorum itself. I remember a story of a good old lady, who used pretty equally to divide her time, between the church and the quadrille-table. A young man of some humour, and of more smartness than discretion, had laid a wager, that he would make her talk over her cards in prayer time. He contrived, the next day to kneel down by her: and when the litany began, whispered in a low voice—I had the terriblest luck last night! No mortal was ever so unfortunate.—Hush: be quiet, Sir, pray have done.—Madam, you shall but hear me.—Pray Sir, fie, by no means, pray be gone, for goodness sake.—I had four matadores: and so on he went telling his

of his moral qualities than Miss Talbot seems to have done. However the character given of him in few words by that wonderful prodigy of early genius, and Christian virtue, H. Kirke White, exactly agrees with hers. See his "Remains" by Southey, vol. i. p. 208.

hand, and the whole process of the game: while she, poor woman, was very seriously angry, and, as she thought, perfectly inattentive to him. He goes on however.—A club was led, I put on a small trump.—Human patience could endure no longer. Pooh, says the good lady, you should have played your ponto.

ESSAY XVII.

On the Power and Necessity of Confidence.

THE stedfastness of a rock, the immoveableness of a center, the firmness of a deep foundation, a pillar of adamant, an everlasting anchor, such to the fluctuating mind of man is a well-grounded confidence *. Without it, all his thoughts are lighter than the leaves in autumn, the sport of every momentary hurricane. His opinions are changeable by every varying circumstance: every mote in a sun-beam suggests some new fancy: he hopes and fears, dislikes and loves, doubts to-day,

* It is impossible to read this passage without being reminded of the sublime ode of the stoical Poet,

Justum et tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida; &c.—HOR. Lib. iii. Ode 3.

trusts to-morrow, accuses himself of credulity the next, then again grows inadvertent, and never lets his busy disquieted imagination rest. His reason, one hour, convinced by weighty arguments, has no impression left of them, another: but, suspecting judgment to be in fault, when only memory is blameable, frankly gives itself up to the next contrary system, and so on *ad infinitum*.

In the intercourse of life, this fatal diffidence insensibly alienates the dearest friends, breaks the kind bonds of mutual trust, or dissolves them, by scarce perceptible insinuations. It particularly oppresses weak spirits: and challenges all the knight-errantry of reason, to free them from the power of this wicked enchanter. It is indeed in his insorcelated palace that, like the people in Ariosto, friends and lovers, deceived by false appearances of one another, are perpetually wearied in a vain pursuit, and groan under a thousand imagined slights and injuries, of which all are equally guiltless; and never gain an ex-

planation to rectify the miserable error. A hero, who lately, perhaps, appeared crowned with laurels, is now, on the sudden, transformed into a monster. Credulous minds! that do not know that the laurel of some virtues, is so absolute a security against all grosser failings, that their eyes must deceive them whenever they represent such a metamorphosis.

But judgments are usually formed, more from particular instances, than from general rules: and hence it is, that they are so contradictory. Every fresh glaring appearance is believed, against the most absolute evidence, that past experience can furnish: and by mere following our noses, we miss the great land-marks, that should direct our journey.

But to grow more methodical: this paper is of too mixed a nature, to allow the dwelling seriously on that religious confidence, which is the ground of all the rest, and of every assured satisfaction in life, or support at the close of it. This is the inexhaustible, eternal source of cheerfulness,

patience, and courage: of that true undaunted fortitude, that inspires the real hero,

Who asks no omen, but his country's cause *.

Distrust and danger vanish at its radiance: constancy and indefatigable perseverance crown it with the noblest success, and with immortal honour. Even the weakness of constitutional cowardice may be relieved by it, from a thousand anxious fears; and raised, upon any extraordinary occasion, into an absolute disregard of all those unreal evils, which so swell the sickly list of apprehension.

In friendship, a mutual confidence is of so absolute necessity, that it is scarcely possible it should subsist, for any time, without it. When once upon reason, and experience, we have given persons an allowed title to our esteem, it is the highest injury both to them, and to ourselves, to remove it upon less than an entire cer-

* Pope's translation of
Εις οιωνος αριστος αμυνεσθαι περι πατρης.—Il. xii. 248.

tainty; and there are some degrees of esteem, that ought to outweigh the very strongest appearances. In such cases we should misdoubt all judgments of our own, rather than suspect the fidelity of a tried friend: and never give it up till we have allowed them the fullest opportunity for vindicating themselves, if appearances have injured them. By this means, nothing will remain perplexed or uneasy upon the anxious mind, but every thing will be fair, clear, and honest.

When truth is presupposed as the foundation, this dependence follows of course, even when the circumstances do not admit of a present explanation.—"Appear-" ances would give me reason to be un-" easy at your behaviour, if friendship " did not forbid my suspecting you."—— " It is very true: and I cannot yet ex-" plain those appearances."——What a world of trouble, and distrust, would such short explanations avoid.

There are few things, which have more struck my imagination, than the meek an-

swer of Balaam's ass, when his master unreasonably corrected him, for what had only the appearance of a fault, and was, in reality, the highest instance of duty and care. In which, after having received a very passionate return to a very gentle expostulation, she only replies,—" Was I " ever wont to do so unto thee?"

ESSAY XVIII.

On true Friendship.

THE only unshaken basis of friendship is religion. True friendship is a union of interests, inclinations, sentiments. Where these greatly clash, here may, indeed, be outward civility, but there can be nothing more.—What then becomes of all those fair ideas, and many fair histories too, of generous friendship sacrificing every interest of its own? What becomes of that worthiest complaisance that bends disagreeing humours into perfect sympathy? What becomes of that powerful affection, that makes often so thorough a change in the sentiments and tempers of persons? All these may consist with a maxim appearing so contrary: for few people look so deep as the real and solid foundation of all, but take those for important interests

and essential points, which indeed are but a temporary superstructure, liable to perpetual alterations.

Whoever to the constancy and faith of friendship sacrifices the interests of fortune, or the indulgence of inclination, pursues still his true and essential interests: since he is strictly performing an important duty. However the opinion of the good may differ in a thousand things, in this they agree, that there "is one thing "needful," and that in all lesser points, candour, complaisance, and good nature, are the temper of mind it requires.

Agreed in this, their inclinations, their pleasures, their pursuits, in all that is important, must be the same *. What openness of heart, what harmony of sentiments, what sweetness of mutual conversation must be the consequence.

* See this beautiful idea expressed also in terms nearly similar, but before Mrs. Carter had seen this Essay, in her Letters to Mrs. Vesey appended to the correspondence between her and Miss Talbot, Letter xxxvi.

Truth, perfectly clear, and undisguised, constancy unchangeable through all the varieties of humour and circumstances, the kindest affection, and the most winning manners flow almost naturally from this source of every good disposition. This infallible rule is a sure guard against all those errors and extremes which the best affections are liable to run into. It makes particular friendships keep within such bounds, as not to interfere with general charity and universal justice. It teaches to distinguish between those errors and frailties of human nature, which in true friendship must be absolutely past over, and those contagious faults which necessarily dissolve it. It heightens the delights of happy friendship, while it teaches us to look upon our friends, as blessings indulged to us, by the All-Giver: and it provides the only balm, that can heal the wounds of friendship cut short by death. It softens every kind anxiety we can feel for those we love, and must feel frequently in a world so full of varied distresses: by bidding us

look up to the almighty Friend and Father of all, "who careth for all alike," and trust in him to give them that assistance and relief, of which we poor helpless creatures, can at best be but very poor instruments. To him we can pour out the affectionate fulness of our hearts, when overwhelmed with a tender concern for their welfare: and may rest assured, that he will guide and prosper our sincere endeavours for their real good.

When the heart has long been used to the delightful society of beloved friends, how dreadful is absence, and how irksome, solitude. But these phantoms of absence and solitude vanish before the sun-shine of religion. Every change of life, every variety of place, allotted us by an all-ruling Providence, grows welcome to us; and while we consider ourselves and our friends, however distant, as equally under the care and protection of the same gracious and omnipresent Being, our common Creator, Redeemer, and Preserver, the distance between us, with all its terrors is annihilated;

while solitude and retirement gives us but the opportunity for a wider range of thought on subjects, that ennoble friendship itself. Then may our minds look forward, through an endless succession of ages, in which the spirits of just men made perfect, renewing in a happier world the affectionate engagements, just began, as it were, in the days of their mortality, shall rejoice in one another's continually improving happiness and goodness, to all eternity. Blessed mansions, where we shall meet again, all those beloved persons whose remembrance is so dear to us! Our friendship shall then, probably, be extended through the whole society of the blest. Every one amiable, every one benevolent, how can it be otherwise? The excellent, of all ages, and nations, shall then be numbered among our friends. Angels themselves will not disdain to admit us to their friendship. Beyond all these glories, we may still raise our thoughts to the supreme Friend and Father, till they are lost in the dazzling, but delightful contemplation.

When so fair a superstructure rises from so fair a basis, who but would build their friendship on this everlasting rock? But alas the slight connections of the trifling world, are but like those wooden buildings raised suddenly for pompous festivals, adorned with every elegance and splendor for a day, and with all the mimickry of marble pillars, and the most solid architecture. The least accident destroys them at once: and a very short time, of course, sees the spot, where they were erected, forlorn and bare *.

* If Mr. Cumberland ever read the passage which concludes this noble Essay, it might be supposed that he had taken from it the hint of the last speech of the third act of his tragedy of the Carmelite. But the same brilliant ideas may often occur to the minds of authors of real genius, without rendering them liable to the imputation of plagiarism.

ESSAY XIX.

On our Passage through Life; a Reverie.

I DO not much love the tribe of dreaming writers. There is something very unnatural in supposing such products of understanding, such a regular series of ideas, generally abstruse and allegorical enough to put the comprehension of a waking reader upon the stretch, to be the effects of wild imagination, at those hours when she is most unassisted by reason and memory. Yet it is pity a lively fancy should be balked, and confined to the dull road of essay-writing, merely to avoid such a trifling absurdity in the phrase. It might certainly be changed with great propriety into that of a *reverie*, which, by people that indulge their imaginations, is often carried on a very considerable time, with as gay a variety of circumstances, and as lively co-

louring as the poppy-dipt pencil of Morpheus could ever produce. Be it allowed me then to say, that one afternoon this summer, I fell into a deep *reverie*, lulled by the whispering of groves, the soft descent of a refreshing shower, and the musical repetitions of a thrush. The air around me was perfumed with jessamins and woodbines, and I found myself perfectly in a poetical situation. The volume I had in my hand should of right, to be sure, have been Ovid or Petrarch, but it was Sunday, and the genteel reader must excuse me if I own that it contained the book of Ecclesiastes.

The soothing scene about me had at length suspended my reading; but my thoughts were still filled with many beautiful images of the nothingness and vanity of human life. There is something so bounded, and so shadowy in our existence, that the celestial beam of understanding which shows us what it is, must give us almost a disgust of life itself, were not our affections attached to it by so many tender

ties, as call back our proud thoughts every moment. Most miserable state, continued I, in a melancholy soliloquy, what wretchednesses are we conversant in, to what mean objects are we bound down, how little a way can we see round us, how much less can we comprehend, through what a wild of errors lies the narrow path of truth! Narrow and long!—Long? Why then it is not methinks so strange, that one should not step to the end of it at once. Well, suffice it that our progress be gradual.—But what a thick dark hedge is here on either side. How much pleasanter would it be to break through it, and view the fair varieties of the universe as we pass along. Suppose it quite away. —In the midst of this vast trackless plain how will you now distinguish your path? —This brink of a precipice that you are to pass along, does not your head turn at it? Do not you wish again for your safe boundary?—Well, but here the path is safe and open.—Amuse yourself, look round you.—I do not like my own path. Yonder

is one much fairer, passing over a much nobler eminence. I like my own path less than ever. I do not yet see far enough.—O thou spirit of disorder and confusion, canst thou not be contented to move in the way allotted thee? Deviate then into ruin. Many a winding walk presents itself on each hand. Art thou willing to venture?—No, let us pursue this safer, vulgar path. Must we have dirt and cloudy weather too?—You must. It belongs to this portion of the universe. This rain that displeases you here, is nourishing sweet herbs and delicious fruits, that will refresh you a few furlongs hence. Behold now the advantage of these despicable things you are hedged in with. These thorns that sometimes pull you back, are often crowned with gay and fragrant blossoms, to make the tedious journey seem less irksome. Those thick trees, that bar your wandering view, are drest in a soft verdure that relieves your eye, and enables it sometimes to take a better glimpse through the branches, on

objects that it could not dwell upon, till it becomes stronger.—Beneath a cypress lay a gloomy philosopher, who called out in a dismal tone, whoever you are, foolish passengers, know your own misery. It is impossible to have any rational enjoyment, in this your despicable state. Banish the thought of comfort. You are a parcel of wretches, to be happy is none of your business, to be cheerful is an absurdity. These blossoms are transient as the spring, those vile fruits you gather as you pass along, ought not to detain your attention one moment from those gems that glitter on your heads, which are your only real treasure. Those wretched fruits what are they?—They are what support us from one state to another, said a plain man, who past by, and our stock of gems is gradually increasing, if we keep but steadily in the right path, and gently and patiently remove the thorns and briars, that molest us, as we move towards the country of diamonds.—Immediately my *Reverie* transported me into a fair. Long streets of

booths crossing each other at right angles formed very regular squares, of which some were handsome and some very ugly, from the different structures of the booths. Several market-women were carrying away bundles and baskets marked with the names of the various proprietors. I met a hag of a very untoward look, bent almost double with the weight of years, her brow wrinkled, and her complexion weather-beaten. The sight of her displeased me, but she was not to be avoided. Here, said she, offering me a filthy basket, covered at the top with thorns, take your purchase, and make much of it. My purchase, said I, stepping back: Nay, said she, e'en take it, and flung it at my head. But as she turned away, a smile that began to brighten on her solemn face, discovered to me that she was the good Fairy *Experience*. I sat down with the encouragement this discovery gave me, and began to examine her basket. The thorns it was covered with cost me a good deal of time to disentangle, and take them out with safety to my fingers, but I

recollected them distinctly every one to be such as had perplexed me and torn my clothes, as I past along the narrow path, and which one by one I had gently broken off the boughs while I pursued my journey. These were the very individual thorns and briars, and while I was wondering how they should come to be so collected, I came to the bottom, where I found a row of inestimable pearls, equal, in number to the briars, large, even, round, and of an exquisite polish. Beside them lay a scrip of paper with these words written on it.

" Philosophy and evenness of temper " are pearls, which we purchase at the " price of those vexations and crosses in " life, that occur to us every day. No- " thing in this world is to be had for no- " thing. Every difficulty we surmount " is the purchase of some advantage. Go " through the fair, and see."

I perceived a good genius standing near me, and desired him to be my cicerone. We went through the booths and examin-

ed the purchases. Here the coin paid down for health and ease, and freedom from perplexity, was stamped with care and prudence. There, the copper money of mere plodding perseverance was the price of wealth, honour, learning and accomplishments. In one place there was a sort of Monmouth-street, where people were bartering old bad habits for new ones, every way more becoming, but seemed to think their bargains very hard, and the very article of fitting them on, occasioned such a variety of wry faces, as would have given great diversion to a grotesque painter. It was a melancholy amusement to see how people mistook in the value they set upon things, how often they passed by, with a slighting air, those goods which at first they might have had for a trifle, and never knew the worth of them, till they were engaged to other bidders, or the price raised very high, or themselves perhaps gone so far off before they took the fancy of returning, that they could not find their way back without a guide; and in the

whole place there was but one guide to be met with, and she of so forbidding an aspect, and so disagreeable a conversation, as made her a very undesirable companion. She severely reproved their folly, and obliged them to throw away the bargains, on which they had most set their heart, and then led them back to the fair, by a rough, round about way, to buy those they had formerly slighted. By the time they had got there, she began to wear a gentler aspect, and they found so much advantage in the change of their purchases, that notwithstanding all her rude treatment, they acknowledged *Repentance* as a very useful friend.

Leisure, I found, was a metal that proved more or less valuable according to the image stamped upon it, and as I saw what admirable curiosities it purchased in the hands of good managers, I was quite provoked to see what quantities of it were flung away: but this was nothing. I saw many fine people throw away handfuls of

diamonds, that they might have their fingers at liberty to catch butterflies.

In some parts of the fair, every body seemed to be playing at cross purposes. The most valuable gems were squandered away for trifles, which yet they could not purchase, and trifles offered for jewels of the highest price. I saw my friend Fosco the antiquarian, among a multitude of the same class, who brought such a quantity of time and industry, as would have purchased any thing in the whole place, and poured it out before a cabinet of copper coins, which, still after all, wanted one or two of being perfect. I saw others of gayer appearance buy a shadow, a flower, a feather, at still a higher price.—At last, to my infinite vexation, a less shadowy figure stood before, and a summons to attend some visitors that were just alighted, put an end to my *reverie*.

ESSAY XX.

On our Capacity for Pleasure.

THERE is a magnificence in nature, like that of some sumptuous feast. The objects of our enjoyment are multiplied infinitely beyond our capacities of enjoying: and there is something, in the human mind, perpetually dissatisfied with its present advantages, because it cannot take in every thing at once. Like silly children, possessed of all within our reach, we cry for all we see.

The desires of our nature so vast, and its capacities so bounded, are demonstrations of a being in its infancy here, and to be perfected hereafter. But having traced this uneasy sentiment, this perpetual craving to its natural source, we should from thence learn to suspend its

force, during our present state; and when once we know at what sort of enjoyments we can arrive, and how vainly we strive to go further, sit down contented with our lot, and try to make the best of it. Were this done, as it should be, spleen would lose half its empire in the world. We should not be much mortified at finding ourselves tied down for a while, to such childish amusements, because we should consider, that our existence has a nobler aim, a higher end in view. In the mean time, till that can be attained, we shall welcome every small satisfaction, with a cheerful countenance, and never be too proud to be pleased.

I cannot help looking upon *pleasure* as a real, and amiable being, and blessing the author of nature, who has created this charmer to lead man on towards final happiness through, as Shakespeare calls it, this worky-day world. This soft enchantress waves her wand, and all nature appears drest in smiles and elegance. Sweet smells, gay colours, musical notes, are

diffused through the whole globe. Every thing is beautiful in its season*. All we have to do, is to open our minds to so rich a variety of delightful impressions: to accommodate ourselves with joy and thankfulness to the present scene, whatever it is, and to make the most of that good, which every thing has in it. To a free mind all is agreeable: but violent attachments to any particular objects narrow the soul, and lessen its capacity for enjoyment.

The first care to be taken is, to keep our minds so loose and disengaged from the world, that setting, as far as possible, the true value upon every thing in it, and no more, we may enjoy all the satisfaction it can possibly afford us, and avoid those anxieties, which misplaced affections create. Violent partialities, must have violent antipathies to balance them: those who set up to themselves idols to worship,

* *And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good.* Gen. i. 31.

will, at the same time, raise to themselves hob-goblins, to fear. We can seldom find in our hearts to exalt one character, without depresssing another: and we must generally have an object of ridicule and dislike, as well as one of esteem and admiration. Nay I am afraid, there are more people, who amuse themselves with seeing every thing in a burlesque and disagreeable light, than of such, as will take the pains to be pleased with an amiable view of this fair world. We are most ingenious to find out what is wanting or amiss in our situations: but how ready to overlook the other side! What complaints of the scorching heat of summer, the pinching cold of winter! For some people, no day is good enough, no place without its faults, no company without its failings. Alas, alas! as if it were any thing new or unexpected, that this world should be, in many things, deficient: as if it were a proof of genius to discover, what it is a much better proof of good sense to pass over, and as if it needed quick eyes to

discern the flaws in this rough cast of a globe. Who could ever expect it to be all made of solid pearl, and polished to the highest lustre? Yet such as it is, if we make the best of it, we shall enjoy no small degree of happiness.

There is in every thing, a charm, a good, that we have capacities to taste, if we would use them. The enthusiastic language of poetry alone, is fitted to describe the bloom of nature, in a country scene. One breath of vernal air diffuses serenity and joy, through the soul. The music of the woods, tunes every thought to harmony. The clear height of the firmament, and the bright blueness of the æther, is transport to the eye, and gladness to the heart. While the sight wanders through the gay expanse, the mind rises to the noblest contemplations, and our thoughts expatiate upon future scenes of fair existence, in worlds all of harmony and beauty.

But, to give us a just view of our capacities for pleasure, and sure this is a rent-roll well worth looking over, we may con-

sider what joy almost every kind of object affords to some set of men or other, and resolve out of duty and prudence to draw some degree of that satisfaction from them, which these do from inclination, or acquired partiality: at least not to overlook with contempt, or regard with aversion, whatever is not contrary to innocence or reason. See but how delighted the florist and botanist are with those blossoms and herbs, which the rest of mankind tread carelessly under foot. Observe the astronomer, with what transport he views those clear stars, which the mortal of business, or the butterfly of amusement, scarce ever find leisure to look up to. Mind the painter, who sees all things in a picturesque view, how charmed he is with the blended lights and shades, in every landscape. Nothing escapes him; each figure has an attitude, an air, something graceful or grotesque*: and so far is not ridiculous.

* The late good and amiable Mr. Gilpin was a striking instance of this kind. In his various tours he seems to have attended (as indeed he professed to do)

Every kind of virtuoso has his darling attention, and each one is the source of some pleasure unknown to the rest of the world. Why may not we share in them all? What a veneration has the antiquary for dust and mould? How pleased is the collector of rarities, with moths and shells, nay, with what many of us should look upon as the refuse and deformities of nature. These good people as much as they despise one another, have, all of them reason on their side, as far as it will carry them. But when attached to one particular thing, we indulge our fondness to an extravagance, then ridicule comes in, with a just reproof. But this belongs only to the degree, to the immoderate fondness; for in some measure, every thing deserves a pleased attention. The flower, the butterfly, the shell, has exquisite beauty: the herb,

to scarcely any thing else, and even in his views and landscapes he drew them not as they were, but as they ought to have been to produce the desired picturesque effect.

invaluable use *. Every species of learning is an improvement to human nature: and those of which the use is not obvious, may tend, perhaps, to important discoveries yet unthought of. Antiquity is truly venerable, its simplicity amiable, its annals instructive. Modern refinements have their merit. The most trifling gaieties of social life exhilarate the heart, and polish the manners. One might as fairly number the sands on the sea shore, as reckon up the multitude of things, that may afford a wise and reasonable pleasure. Were our lives here stretched out to some thousands of years, we might still be learning or enjoying something new. Yet this consideration does not make long life at all desirable, since our advantages in another state will be superior to all, that our best improvements can help us to acquire in this.

* And this our life exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.
Shakespeare. As you like it, Act II.

ESSAY XXI.

On Reflection as the Source of Cheerfulness.

HOW vain, and how vexatious is the flutter of the world! Even I, who am sufficiently sensible, perhaps too much so, to its pleasures and amusements, can find, after a little while, my spirits quite worn out by them, and learn from a frequent experience, that reflection of the most serious sort, is the only true and lasting source of cheerfulness.

As most of our affections here take their deepest tinge from the workings of imagination, so there are perhaps scarce any, that will maintain their terrifying shapes against the calm efforts of reason: but, when amidst the hurry of a mixed and varied scene, we give them only now and then a transitory glance, these airy phantoms cast a gloom and horror over

our whole lives. It is then, that poverty and pain, and sickness, disgrace and disappointment, nay satiety itself, strike upon our unguarded fancies, in the most dreadful manner. Our hearts are filled with sorrow, and poured out in ungrateful complainings. Cool reflection alone can disdain these bugbears of the mind: and to one who comprehends, so far as our bounded understandings can comprehend, the universal scheme of Providence, few of its particular dispensations will appear severe, while every present suffering is overbalanced by a glorious futurity.

How naturally the contemplation of what is most melancholy, leads to the most enlivening hopes, may be seen in some verses, which I will insert here, and which flowed from a natural chain of thoughts from the trifling, but gloomy incident of a bell tolling at midnight.

Hark! with what solemn toll the midnight bell
Summons Reflection to her dusky cell:
With leaden sound it dully strikes the ear,
Bids Horror wake and careless Fancy hear;

Chill'd Fancy hears with awful gloom oppress,
Thus by the deep-felt wordless voice address.

Wake mortal! wake from Pleasure's golden dream,
The present gay pursuit, the future scheme;
The vain regret of hours for ever past,
The vain delights in joys not made to last:
The vainer prying into future days,
Since, ere to-morrow's sun exerts its rays,
My toll may speak them vain to thee. Thy fears,
Thy hopes, thy wishes vain, and vain thy tears.
What then to thee, whose folded limbs shall rest
In the dark bosom of the sabled chest,
What will it then import to thee if fame,
With flatt'ring accents, dwells upon thy name,
Or spurns thy dust, or if, thy mould'ring form
Safe from life's dang'rous calm, or dreadful storm,
Sleeps in the concave of a well-turn'd tomb
By marble Cupids mourn'd amid the gloom
Of some old Abbey, venerably rude,
In Gothic pride: or in some solitude
Beneath the spreading hawthorn's flow'ry shade,
Crown'd with fresh grass and waving fern is laid:
Trod, in some public path, by frequent feet
Of passing swains, or deck'd by vi'lets sweet:
Nameless, unheeded, till a future day
Shall animate to bliss the lifeless clay.

Or whether gaily past thy festive hours,
Bath'd in rich oils, and crown'd with blooming flow'rs;
Or pinch'd with want, and pin'd with wasting care,
All joys, all griefs, alike forgotten there.

The part well acted, gracious heav'n assign'd,
If of the king, the warrior or the hind,
It matters not: or whether deck'd the scene
With pomp, and show, or humble, poor and mean.
The coloring of life's picture fades away,
When to these shades succeeds a clearer day.
The colouring partial Fortune blindly gave,
Debas'd the imperial figure to a slave.
In glitt'ring robes, bade shapeless monsters glow,
And in a crown conceal'd the servile brow.
Perhaps false lights on well-drawn figures thrown,
Scarce cautious Virtue would her image own:
But when the gloss of titles, wealth and pow'r,
Of Youth's short charm, and Beauty's fading flow'r,
Before Truth's dazzling sun shall fade away,
And the bare out-lines dare the piercing ray,
Then if the pencil of thy life has trac'd
A noble form, with full proportion grac'd,
A model of that image, heav'n imprest
In the first thoughts of thy untainted breast,
Whate'er the painting Fortune's hand bestow'd,
Whether in crimson folds thy garments flow'd,
Or rags ungraceful, o'er thy limbs were thrown,
Thy ev'ry virtue overlook'd, unknown;
An eye all-judging, an all-pow'rful hand
The bounteous pallet shall at length command,
Reject the vicious shape that shrinks away,
Stript of those robes, that drest it once so gay.
Excuse the imperfect form, if well design'd,
Where the weak stroke betray'd the enlighten'd mind;

Grant ev'ry ornament and ev'ry aid
On ev'ry failing cast the proper shade,
And bid each smiling virtue stand display'd;
Improving ev'ry part, with skill divine,
Till the fair piece in full perfection shine.

ESSAY XXII.

On the Employments of Life.

WHY is it that almost all employments are so unsatisfactory, and that when one hath past a day of common life, in the best way one can, it seems, upon reflection, to be so mere a blank? And what is the conclusion to be drawn from so mortifying an observation? Certainly not any conclusion in favour of idleness: for employment, as such, is a very valuable thing. Let us have done ever so little, yet if we have done our best, we have the merit of having been employed, and this moral merit is the only thing of importance in human life.

To complain of the insignificancy of our employments, is but another name for

repining at that Providence, which has appointed, to each of us, our station: let us but fill that well, to the utmost of our power, and whatever it be, we shall find it to have duties and advantages enough.

But whence, then, is this constant dissatisfaction of the human mind; this restlessness, this perpetual aim at something higher and better, than, in the present state, it ever can attain? Whence, but from its celestial birth, its immortal nature, framed for the noblest pursuits and attainments, and in due time, to be restored to all this dignity of being, if it does but behave properly in its present humiliation.

Be that as it will, there is something painful in this strong sense of worthlessness and meanness, that must make people of leisure and reflection pass many an uneasy hour. Perhaps there is nothing better fitted to wean us from life: but in doing that, it by no means ought to

hinder us from industry and contentment. Every station, every profession, every trade has its proper set of employments, of which it is an indispensable duty for every person to inform themselves with care, and to execute with patience, perseverance and diligence. This rule of duty holds, from the emperor to the artisan: for though the employments are different, the duty, that enforces them, is the same, in all. Man is born to labour: it is the condition of his being: and the greatest cannot exempt themselves from it, without a crime.

If we consider well, we shall find, that all employments, in this transient scene, come pretty much to the same nothingness.—The labours of those who were busy and bustling on this globe, five or six hundred years ago—what now remains of them, but the merit, to the persons themselves, of having been well employed! How many valuable books, the employment, and the worthy one, of whole lives,

have perished long ago, with the very name of their authors! The strongest monuments of human art and industry, obelisks, temples, pyramids are mouldered into dust, and the brittle monuments of female diligence in pye-crust, are not more totally lost to the world. To found an empire was enough to gain a sort of immortality; yet the empires themselves have proved mortal *.

There are certainly some employments of a noble, and a happy kind, but, in no degree, answerable to our ideas: for the best we can do, is most poor, whether we would improve ourselves, or do good to our fellow-creatures, in comparison of the capacity of our mind, in its original state; which resembles some vast Roman amphitheatre, that once contained myriads of

* ——— Empires die; where now
The Roman? Greek? They stalk an empty name!
Yet few regard them in this useful light;
Tho' half our learning is their epitaph.

Young's Night Thoughts, ix.
Published about 1745.

happy people within its ample round: defaced and ruined it can now scarcely afford shelter from the sudden storm, to a few silly shepherds *.

* As in those domes where Cæsars once bore sway,
Defac'd by time, and tott'ring in decay,
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed,
And, wond'ring man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.
Goldsmith's "Traveller," printed 1765.

A singular coincidence of idea; for Miss Talbot died in 1769, and her health had been too bad, for several years before, to allow her to compose.

ESSAY XXIII.

On Resignation to the Will of Providence.

IT is too common, for persons, who are perfectly convinced of the duty of patience and cheerful resignation, under great and severe trials, in which the hand of Providence is plainly seen, to let themselves grow fretful and plaintive under little vexations, and slight disappointments: as if their submission in one case, gave them a right to rebel in another. As if there was something meritorious in the greater sufferings, that gave them a claim to full indulgence in every trifling wish of their heart: and accordingly they will set their hearts most violently upon little reliefs and amusements, and complain and pity themselves grievously, if they are at any time denied.

All this is building on a false foundation. The same gracious Providence, that sends *real* afflictions only for our good, will, we may be absolutely sure, afford us such supports and reliefs under them, as are needful and fit: but it will not accommodate itself to our idle humour.

To be happy, we must depend for our happiness on Him alone, who is able to give it. We must not lean on human props of any kind: though when granted us, we may thankfully accept and make use of them; but always with caution, not to lay so much weight upon them, as that the reed broken under our hand, may go into it, and pierce it *.

On the loss of a friend, we must not say, *this* and *that* person, *this* and *that* amusement shall be my relief and support. But—to Providence I must submit—Providence will support me in what way it sees proper.—The means on which I must depend, under *that*, are a careful and cheerful performance of, and an acqui-

* See Isaiah xxxvi. 6.

escence in whatever is my duty. I must accommodate myself to all its appointments: and be they health or languor, a dull, or an active and gay life; a society agreeable to my fancy, or one that is not, or none at all; if I do but endeavour to keep up this right disposition, and behave accordingly, nothing *ought* to make me melancholy, or unhappy, nothing *can*, nothing *shall*. Forward *beyond* this life, in this case, I not only *may*, but *ought* to look, with joy and hope, with cheerfulness and alacrity of spirit. Forward *in* this life, it is not only *painful*, but *faulty* to look either with anxiety, or with self-flattering schemes. Yet *on* this present scene, from day to day, and *forward*, so far as is necessary to the duty of prudence, I may look with a smile of content and gratitude: for every day has something, has innumerable things, good and chearful in it, if I know but how to make the best of it.

In a change of situation, think not like a child, of the toys you leave, and the toys you shall find, to make you amends

for them. All play-things are brittle. Think not, like a grazing animal, that you have changed one pasture for another: and shall graze on this, or that herb here, with delight: "The herb withereth, the flower "fadeth" every where. But think, like a reasonable creature.—This change was appointed for me: acquiescence is my duty: duty must be my support. Yet I know, such is the condescendence of infinite goodness, that I shall have many a slighter relief, and agreeableness thrown in: but these are by the by: not to be reckoned on before-hand, nor to be grieved for, if they fail or intermit.

ESSAY XXIV.

On the Happiness derived from Society.

WHAT are my ideas of happiness? Negative ones present themselves first. A freedom from guilt—from self-dislike—from fear—from vexation—from languor—from pain—from sorrow.

The joy of early youth and early morning, that is, vigour and capacity for continual improvement, and a long space before one to exert them in, with a variety of new and noble objects.—But, alas, how am I fitted for this, who have acquired such strong habits of loitering indolence—lost all power of application.

Therefore application, a *habit* of it ought to be re-acquired, though the objects of it *here*, are looked upon with the indifference they so highly deserve.

The approbation and protection and guidance of the good, wise, amiable, and great—how much have I undeservedly

experienced of that, even here! But mixed with a painfulness, and degree of suspicion, from feeling that *I* am nothing, and have no claim to it: and that the best of *them* are but a degree above nothing: are fallible, and may be deceived, in me, or mislead me: are mortal, and must forsake me, and leave me.—But look higher, and there is a power, that can make us what it will, and goodness that wills our happiness, and wisdom, that can fully fit us for it: and majesty and amiableness—no expression can reach the ideas, that fill the soul, in this contemplation and hope. Total solitude in the enjoyment of thoughts like these, seems, to me, high happiness.—But the corruptible body would soon press down the mind: the exhausted spirits would sink into wretchedness, and there would be a self-reproach for the neglect of social duties. There will be duration enough for all, hereafter, and strength for every various exertion. There are some poor pleasures here, which are only such, because the

mortal frame requires them, as it does food, and sleep. These are what one calls relaxations, amusements, trifles, that unbend the mind, and vary its ideas agreeably. The sight of gay flowers or sunny landscapes; the song of birds; the sportings of innocent imagination, in some trifling book; the gaieties of young animals *. I am very thankful for these, in their season, but past the moment when they are necessary, the landscape soon fades, if seen by one's self alone: and the book gives it quite another kind of delight, if read in a society, that are equally pleased. The amusement of animals, is from seeing them happy, and all this tends to promote right dispositions, as the contemplation of beautiful objects, and sweet sounds, raises the mind to grateful adoration.

The mortal pleasure I can the least know

* How much delight the pious as well as elegant mind of Miss Talbot received from these innocent trifles is particularly observable in her Letters to Mrs. Carter from Cuddesden.

See the "Series of Letters." Vol. I.

how to lay out of my ideas, is the sweet forgetfulness of quiet and refreshing sleep: a great blessing *here*, but only *here* where there are cares, and fears and follies to be forgot. But if not indulged beyond needful refreshment, it ought, surely, while we are here, to be accepted with humble thankfulness.

The joys of society are of all others, most mixed with pain. Yet where all are perfect, and where all are happy, how sublime must they be * ! Alas my great, my continual failure is in social duties! Why! Because I am almost continually in society. In solitude, one has nothing to do, but to cherish good and pleasing dispositions. In society, at every unguarded moment, bad and painful ones break out, and fill one with shame, remorse, and vexation. Selfishness shews its ugly head: little contradictions excite vehemence of temper, to put out its claws:

* And how noble is even the slight insight which the inspired writer has given us into it!

See Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

talkativeness prates away the inestimable hours, without use or pleasure. Even good humour, and easiness of temper must be restrained and mortified, else they lead to criminal negligence, and destructive extravagance. The justest affections must be regulated, else they tie down the heart too much. On the contrary, justice and gratitude demand often, that our kindest affections should be excited and exprest, where natural temper and inclination do not prompt them. We ought with the strictest eye of justice to distinguish right and wrong in characters, and yet with the tenderest charity to overlook, and compassionate ten thousand lesser faults, and disagreeablenesses.

In short, the life of society is the life of constant, unremitting mortification, and self-denial. It is this, that makes the only useful hardship of the cloister, not the fastings, hair-cloths, watchings, and disciplines. But it is really still harder in uncloistered society. To keep the mind in right frame, amid ten thousand interrup-

tions: to be regular, and diligent, without the possibility of any settled plan: to spread cheerfulness when one is not pleased: to support it in one's self, when others are dejected—and a sad look, or a sad word, from those I love, sinks my heart: as a good word, and a smile raises it instantaneously.

But far, far better than the cloistered rules of man's foolish and arbitrary invention, the life of society, with all its self-denials, is the appointment of the Almighty. Every individual, of human society, is ennobled, and endeared by its relation to him. For the meanest of these, Christ died. Our love to each other, to every one of each other, is the proof required of our being his disciples.

Selfishness therefore must be continually overcome, except where some real harm, or great pain may be avoided by very slight inconvenience: and then it should not be cunningly contrived, but openly requested: and if granted, accepted as a favour, or the refusal cheerfully acquiesced in.

But, in other respects, how can we do good? Follow as God's providence leads, each in his station, within his bounds, and within his capacity. Above all keep up cheerfulness and good humour. An air of dissatisfaction is doubly faulty. It belies your eternal hopes, and disheartens all around you.—But conversation is so empty, so useless.—Keep it peaceable and innocent, at least. Restrain talkativeness in yourself, that you may think a little, how to introduce somewhat useful: but do not strive too much. Mere good humour is *very* useful: it tunes the mind. Do, in every thing, the best you can: and trust in better merits, that it shall be accepted. Look forward to the conversation of angels, and perfected spirits: of those whom you have loved, and who have loved you amidst all your mutual imperfections here. *There* will be nothing but joy, and eternal improvement. All joined in executing the divine will, and dwelling on its praises. No more fear of sorrow, or parting: no more doubts and jealousies of yourself: no

anxieties for them: all fixed and secure. Of past sorrows and frailties will remain only the everlasting gratitude of those who have been relieved, and forgiven. Each to other, in their due degrees: all supremely, to their God, and Saviour!

ESSAY XXV.

On Trust in Providence.

THIS is a day * I have cause to bless. Let no gloomy thought come near it. But can I keep out of my mind, the thought of such a friend, as I so lately had; with a whole train of ideas attending that thought? No; undoubtedly: but let me think of that friend, and regulate those ideas, as I ought. Let me, with humble, joyful gratitude, consider, in how many excellent beings I have the interest of an affectionate and beloved friend. Glories of the world! I look down upon you: my happiness, my boast are of a higher kind.

These friends are, at present, far separated from one another, but all happy: and, in a blessed hereafter, I am permitted

* Probably her birth-day.

humbly but joyfully to hope, that we shall all be eternally re-united. What mutual gratulations, what tender recollections must attend that re-union! And oh, what unspeakable gratitude and adoration to him, through whose blessed redemption, that bliss shall be attained, and "this mortal put on immortality!" The frail human heart can hardly bear the transport of the thought! This idea is too vast, and too bright.—Yet, it is not a fairy vision, but a stedfast, eternal truth.

Far away, then, all melancholy apprehensions of death, of pain, of parting, mere shadows every one! For what is pain? An hour of trial, the proof of our faith, patience and fortitude.—What is death? The entrance upon our reward, the end of our dangers and perplexities, the point to which we have been tending from our birth.—What is parting? More bitter in itself than death, because it leaves us destitute of our dearest supports, in a state wherein we seem to need them most. This then, as the severest pain, is the

noblest trial. And are we not sure that we are in the hands of a merciful God, whose every attribute is engaged to lay no more upon us, than our own faith and own sincere endeavours concurring, he will enable us to bear, to triumph over?

We are born into this world poor helpless creatures: but parents, friends, protectors are provided to conduct us up to maturity. An all-gracious Providence works by what variety of instruments it sees fit: but fit instruments it never wants, and never can want. The seeds of good and evil grow up with us: at least, the enemy sows his tares so early that they soon overtake the grain. To root out the one, and to cherish the other, is the business of life. What is it, to us, by what means, or by what change of hands, the Master of the harvest vouchsafes to do this? since our great concern is only, that it be effectually done, and then, we are well assured, that He "will gather the "wheat in o his garner."

He, who has given the former rain in its season, will not deny the latter rain, also, to the diligent and pious husbandman. Where a merciful Providence has remarkably blest the earlier part of life, the well-disposed heart need not fear, that the later years of it shall be left destitute. Every fit support and guidance shall be provided: nay every comfort and delight, that contradicts not some still kinder intention, or more important aim.

Sufferings belong to human nature. Of these, some persons have a larger, some a lighter share, and this indiscriminately, in some measure, to bad and good. This appointment is for wise reasons, some of which even our poor shallow understandings can trace. But the good are assured that they shall never want any necessary support, under their sufferings: and to know that they are liable to them, is one appointed trial of their faith, of their submission. A true Christian knows, that all these things shall finally work together

for his good. Why then should he dread any of them?

But when these sufferings are actually present, how must they be supported?—cheerfully. To those who know, that all is, on the whole, well, every passing day brings its amusement and relief: and let these be thankfully accepted. Those who are removed out of this world are happy: they are removed in God's good time. Those, who are continued in it, must rejoice in every comfort, that attends their continuance: must be thankful for every added year. For, is not life a blessing? May not this added time be improved to most excellent purposes? Let this then be our endeavour.

While continued in human society, let us preserve a sociable, a friendly spirit. Let our joyful affectionate remembrance attend those, who are removed already into a higher class of beings. But let our active love be exerted towards all our fellow travellers: and let it be our aim, so

far as we are enabled, to lead many along with us towards those happy mansions. This, at present, it seems, is the only work we are fit for; and is it not a blessed one?

"Be glad O ye righteous, and rejoice "in the Lord, for a good and pleasant "thing it is to be thankful!"

ESSAY XXVI.

On the Necessity of Innocent Amusement.

AMUSEMENT is useful and laudable, not when it draws the mind from religious subjects (in this view the world uses it and is destroyed by it) but, when it takes the thoughts from such sorrows as are merely temporal, and imaginary, and so refits them for that better employment, which, without this harmless medium, they could not so soon or so well have resumed. The idle mind flies improvement as its enemy, and seeks amusement as its end. The Christian heart has but one home, one joy, one pursuit. But from this home it is too often detained: from this joy it is too often shut out: in this pursuit it is, too often, hindered, by the frailty of human nature, the necessary attentions and en-

gagements of life, the attachments of affinity, and friendship.

On this side eternity, cares and sorrows will be felt, in some degree, by the best: but the Christian, who knows that it is his absolute duty to rejoice, and give thanks, in every thing, indulges not those gloomy hours, nor wilfully harbours one melancholy thought. Yet striving with such thoughts, is only to be worse entangled in them. At such times the good and humble mind, accepts thankfully the assistance of the veriest trifle, the most common and uninteresting object, or employment, that can dissipate the present chain of vain and tiresome thought: and this chain once broken, it flies with recruited vigour to its true home, "as a bird out of the "snare."

By common and uninteresting objects, I mean only to exclude all indulgences of fancy and imagination, and such amusements as seem interesting, because they indeed sooth the disposition, which we suppose ourselves flying from, as, for example,

melancholy music, and poetically solemn scenes. But, in a higher view, the least flower of the field, is a more interesting object than the proudest palace. For what object can be small or uninteresting, that is the work and gift of the Almighty! This flower, or insect, or shell, would Aspasia say, is given to me, at this instant by ever present, ever watchful goodness, to call off my thoughts from their present vain anxiety, or sinful regret, to the thankful contemplation of a gracious Creator, and Redeemer.—This employment, this company, that calls my present attention from subjects, it could wish to pursue, though it pursues them to its hurt: this dull and unedifying company, this dry and trifling employment, is, in the order of Providence, a kind remedy, to unbend my mind, and thereby restore its strength. As such I will thankfully accept it, and cheerfully turn myself to it: for if I am absent in company, I had better be alone; my soul is equally wasting its strength, in earnest thought, and melancholy recollec-

tion, and my appearance discredits the cause of religion.

These are the reasons, that make it a duty to open the mind to every innocent pleasure: to the admiration of every rural object, to harmless pleasantry and mirth, to such a general acquaintance with arts and sciences, trades and manufactures, books and men, as shall enable us to attend to, and to be amused, in some degree, with every scene, and with every conversation. There is just the same pride in resolving, that our minds shall be always employed on the stretch, as in imagining that our reason is a competent judge of all subjects: human frailty and imperfection, alike forbids both. The Israelites gathered their manna, from day to day: so should we our temporal pleasures, and comforts, and trust him to provide for to-morrow, who supplied us yesterday. When through eagerness, and fondness of mind, we hoard up, by anxious schemes and wishes, a portion for ourselves, it breeds

but corruption. Only in the ark can it be laid up safe *.

* This poetic and beautiful illustration may not perhaps be well understood by those who are not very conversant with Bible history.

See Exod. xvi. 20 *and* 33.

LETTERS

TO A

FRIEND

ON

A FUTURE STATE,

IN THE

CHARACTER OF A GUARDIAN ANGEL.

LETTER I *.

THE curiosity you expressed in a conversation, which we heard with pleasure, we may within those limits you acknowledged just, be permitted to gratify. *New* discoveries must not be expected—Could *you* explain to a child the delights afforded by science? Or to one born blind the exquisite sensations produced by light and beauty? But so far as may be collected from what hath been revealed, we are ready and delighted to assist and guide your search. Startle not at the darkness which is before you, and the irremediable gulph that *must* be passed. From that bourn, one traveller *hath* returned, and returning, irradiated the gloomy shades with beams of celestial light. In *that* human form, though cloathed with splendour

* These Letters were never published before.

inexpressible, he shall again return *. Each guardian angel shall then attend the charge, whom, through all the scenes of mortal life, he had endeavoured to protect †; and who having by humble faith and sincere obedience secured the supreme protection, was in the closing hour committed to his peculiar care. How ineffectual at that dark season are the tenderest soothings of mortal friends! Yet even those soothings, though blended by sympathy for the distress which mingles with them, are dear to the sickening heart. But there is one who can in the most trying moment speak it into instantaneous and eternal joy. By him commissioned, how joyfully do *we* receive the wearied combatant—But weariness is vanished; pain

* See Acts i. 11, and Matt. xxv. 31.

† This is a doctrine which, though not expressly taught in Scripture, yet receives some countenance from passages in it. *In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.* Matt. xviii. 10. *Are they not all ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?* Heb. . 14.

and sorrow are for ever gone; and all his sympathy now is with rejoicing, and congratulating angels. Among the many mansions in the house of our heavenly Father, one most delightful be assured there is, as completely prepared for the abode and happiness of the separated spirits of the just, as this earth of your's is for the mingled society of mortal men. However far the distance of this Paradise, the penitent thief found scarcely any interval between that and Calvary. Whatever its employments, for spiritual beings are ever active, imagine not that they can alter the state of its final account. *That* at the hour of death is irrevocably closed. As the tree falleth * so shall it lie. If stunted here no other spring shall ever add to its growth; if it was hitherto unfruitful, no future autumn shall enrich its idle branches. But still, there may be employments numberless, more delightful than you can conceive New faculties may be expand-

* Eccles. xi. 3.

ing—but enough for this once. Think frequently of these solemn, these exalting subjects; but think not too intensely. Let not the speculations of eternity encroach on the duties of time. In this *only now* you can exercise the human virtues—go, relieve the distressed; sympathize with the afflicted; rejoice with the innocently cheerful; cement the ties of friendship; promote the inseparable cause of religion and virtue; enjoy and improve the comforts of society; and patiently suffer the infirmities and sorrows of mortality. One morning in the week you shall find a Letter on the table from

Your Guardian though your

Fellow-Servant.

LETTER II.

THE week is come round, and you expect to find another Letter; but affected as you are, my poor mortal charge, with every variety of the wintry season, are you fit to attend to these sublimer subjects? Attempt not contemplations beyond your little strength. Be satisfied that the time will come when we shall be permitted freely and delightfully to discourse with you, because *then* you will be able to bear and to comprehend our discourse. Know you not that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard" those things which Almighty goodness hath prepared; and how then should we convey to you any ideas of them? But so much you may know, and therefore should know, as may fill you with cheerful hope, and excite you to ardent pursuit of the inestimable prize. And

yet amid the toils and miseries of mortal life, it might seem that merely negative descriptions might content you. To rest from care and sorrow—to indulge without fault a long sweet unmolested repose, in the assurance of waking to a joyous everlasting morning! Might not this, my indolent charge, well satisfy your wishes for the present? No. You would fain know if this sleep is at least varied by delightful dreams, as you suspect that your mind even in sleep is never totally idle. But I must not let you farther into the theory even of dreams than your own observations may lead you. What hint was it you caught so long ago in Mr. Locke of *sleeping meditations?* Pursue it if you can. Observe you not sometimes that you wake out of quite a different sort of world from that to which your days are accustomed? And yet at the time all its scenery has appeared familiar to you, and not unpleasing *. On your efforts to

* It is an idea prevalent in the East, that the soul quits the body, and is actually present in the scenes re-

grasp them by recollection the thin ideas shrink away, and in a few moments are quite vanished. Strive not to retain them —the talents committed to your trust now, are your waking active hours. Perhaps but few remain. Improve them to the utmost: then shall you give up your account with joy. But where, you ask, are now those companions of your former years, whose time of trial is over, whose trust is discharged, who no longer mingle in this active scene, for whom the sun rises and sets no more? Where? Why equally in the divine presence as yourself —recollect you not the time, in former days of fancy, when you fondly delighted to contemplate the moon because a

presented in the dream. Some Christians also seem to entertain a similar opinion. The late learned Mr. Porson was collecting materials towards forming a theory of this kind; and made anxious enquiries of his friends whether they had ever distinctly dreamt of any known animal when dead; obviously supposing that the soul, in its nocturnal excursions, could have no communication with those deceased creatures which have no souls.

favourite distant friend might possibly at the same time be gazing on the same bright object? This fancy seemed to cancel distance, and bring you near together. Think then that not the waning moon, but the source of glory shines on them with the same gracious beams, that in mercy extend even to you. But oh with how much brighter lustre! Yet should they, for reasons infinitely wise and kind, be kept for a while in unconscious security, consider that to them, who are now become heirs of eternity, a thousand years will pass over as one day—while to you one day ought to seem as important as a thousand years, since millions of ages may depend upon it. Oh learn to improve it well. To awaken you to diligence with the continual repetition of this important lesson, I amuse your curiosity, and converse with you in this unusual manner, on the subject that has most excited it. Meditate often on futurity; but not so as vainly to trifle away present time. This is certain, that the friends you loved, exist now as *really*

as when you conversed with them, and much more *happily*. A more infallible word than mine hath assured you, that they are *blessed*: that *they rest from their labours*: and that *their works follow them*. Follow them now, for ought you know, with a pleasing though humble consciousness of faithful though imperfect endeavours: and will follow them on that great day, for which all other days are made, with a crown of everlasting praise and joy.

LETTER III.

YOUR meditations have been busy again about unseen futurities; your eye is impatiently cast every morning on your table, and you eagerly expect another Letter from your invisible attendant; though you have yet learnt nothing new from either of the former. There is somewhat in your curiosity that ought for your good to be checked, and yet somewhat laudable in it that deserves to be indulged. Your thoughts cannot be more nobly employed, nor fixed on a more absolutely certainty than that future state which now engages them. There is also a grateful affection to many dear friends whom you once justly numbered among your greatest earthly blessings, that makes you fondly inquisitive into their actual situation and employment. that their situation is

happy and certain; *that they are in peace;* that *the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them;* that our common Lord will *raise them up at the last day,* body and soul; and call them to a participation of his ineffable joy; of all this you are infallibly assured. And can you not be contented to live by such a faith? Must the fond eye of imagination needs be soothed with a fancied sight of pleasing scenes, and a Christian elysium? Why, be it so; the lively powers of sweet imagination were granted to the children of men with a gracious intent to counterbalance the low cares and frequent sufferings of their mortal state. It is their own fault when imagination is taught to excite every hurtful passion, and add fresh stings to every pain. So far as your's can travel along with tolerably rational conjecture, and under the guidance of submissive resignation, I am content for the present half hour (as you mortals parcel out that pittance of duration which you call time)

to attend her airy steps. Perhaps I may even help her over the first bar. Since *as the tree falleth so it must lie*, you are inclined to think there can be no increase in goodness during that whole length of time that stretches from the hour of death to the last period of human things: and during your Christian race you have been so justly taught to consider standing still as in effect going back, that you cannot form an idea how thousands of years should innocently and happily pass over creatures unimproved in their course. Continual improvement is the law of your mortal state of trial—he who loiters in a race must lose, but he who has happily reached the goal may rest. Perhaps beyond the period of these stars and planets, new amazing scenes of delightful activity, and extatic progression to inconceiveable improvement, with still brighter crowns in view, may be for ever opening on the spirits of the blessed. Allow them a few ages of recruit before they are to enter on the boundless barrier. Of *this* for the

present no more. Is your first difficulty removed? *As the tree falleth so it must lie.* True: there can after your present state of trial is ended, be no change from bad to good. But who hath told you that there may be no change from good to better? each spirit still keeping its own proportion, but each in that proportion advancing still to new degrees of knowledge, of charity, of devotion, and rapturous gratitude? Increase in knowledge cannot be made by such a spirit as hath by the all-gracious Redeemer been accepted in the hour of death, without bringing proportionable improvements in every divine affection. But these are no longer, as in this world, *rewardable*, since they are no longer a toil, a struggle, a victory; but mere necessity of nature, an earnest and a blessed part of the infinite *reward* which He hath obtained for all that will. Oh think frequently of *this*, my frail charge; think that you may attain—that you may forfeit, your share in this inestimable blessedness. Whoever will

may take the waters of life and drink freely. And will you bestow your thoughts and care on *broken cisterns* and muddy streams. Think how the friends whom you have so dearly loved and lamented, may by this time be improved, and that if you press on here, you too shall hereafter attain to your proportionable improvement. Endeavour even to overtake the foremost excellence. To awaken you out of heartless despondency—to rouse you from dangerous indolence, is an important part of my commission—the shielding you from bodily peril, or relieving you in painful moments, is nothing in comparison. What availed the temporary preservation of the unprofitable tree, if after all the pains bestowed, it was at last cut down as a *cumberer of the ground* * ? That *last* must soon come, but if the tree bear *good fruit*, *well*—it will not then be cut down, but transplanted into the groves of Paradise.

* See Luke xiii. 6, &c.

DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUE I.

Description of a Moral but not Gloomy Retirement.

MY dear friend Imagination, what place will you allot for my Winter's habitation, when I have a mind to retire from the hurry of the town, and review the actions of every passing day?

A little hermitage, on the eastern side of the highest mountain, in the kingdom of *Katascopia* *.

Order a set of ideas to be put to your rapid chariot, and transport me thither as soon as you please; for I am already charmed with the proposal.

A winding path leads you by an imper-

* Contemplation.

ceptible ascent, through groves of laurels, bays, pines, oaks, cedars, myrtles, and all kinds of beautiful ever-greens, with which the sides of the mountains are eternally covered, to an apartment cut out in the substance of the rock, and consisting of two rooms. You enter into the first, through an arch hewn out, without much art; and whose only ornaments are the ivy, with which it is almost entirely overgrown, and the chrystalline isicles, which winter hangs on the inequalities of its surface. The only light that it receives, is through this arch: and the plainness of the furniture is answerable to that of the building. The floor is covered with a kind of moss, that is always dry: and a couch of the same goes round the room. On the right side, at the further end, is a little stone-table, with the Hermit's usual furniture, a book, a skull, an hour-glass, and a lamp. Near the mouth of the cave is a telescope: and on the left side, a small door opens into a little square apartment, formed to indulge less melan-

choly meditations. Opposite to the entrance, are shelves filled with books, of a serious and moral nature, that take up one side of the room. A bed of plain white dimity, with two chairs of the same, is opposite to the chimney, where a cheerful wood fire is continually blazing. Near the fire is placed a little table, and a low seat, more for convenience, than show; and the walls are covered with a white paper, over which, a vine seems to spread its leafy shade.

You have described this retirement to my wish. A mere hermitage would be too gloomy for a constant dwelling. And yet there are many hours in which the solemnity of the outward cell, with the moon shining into it, and faintly gleaming on its melancholy furniture, would suit my turn of thought, better than the brightest sun, glittering on the gayest scenes.

I have not yet mentioned to you the most agreeable circumstance of the outward cell, its delightful and extensive view.

Is not that obstructed by the groves of ever-greens, through which you ascend to this seat of calm wisdom?

It is placed high enough for the spectator to look over their venerable tops, and see the current of life, a wide extended ocean, gliding swiftly along, at the foot of the mountain. Beyond it, but half concealed in woods, lie the happy islands, and the bleak and doleful regions, where all that infinite number of barks, that cover this immense ocean, sooner or later dislodge their weary passengers. The observations you will make, from this eminence, on the course of the sea, the various rocks and whirlpools, that make its passage dangerous; the conduct of the pilots, and the behaviour of the passengers, will give you important instructions, for the guidance of your own bark. You may even see your own: and by a timely observance, avoid every danger that threatens it, and improve every favourable gale, to the best advantage.

DIALOGUE II.

Enquiry how far Practice has kept pace with Intention.

WHAT have you done, this Summer?

Rode, and laughed, and fretted.

What did you intend to do?

To learn geography, mathematics, decimal fractions and good humour: to work a screen, draw copies of two or three fine prints, and read abundance of history: to improve my memory, and restrain my fancy: to lay out my time to the best advantage: to be happy myself, and make every body else so. To read Voltaire's Newton, Whiston's Euclid, and Tillotson's Sermons.

Have you read nothing?

Yes: some of the Sermons; Mrs. Rowe's Works: the Tale of a Tub; a book of Dr.

Watts's; L'Histoire du Ciel; Milton, and abundance of plays and idle books.

Do you remember nothing of your geography?

Not so much as what belongs to England.

Mathematics——

Turn my head.

And what is your fine head good for?

To wear a pair of Brussels lappets, or spin out extravagant imaginations and fancies.

How does your arithmetic go on?

I have bought one of the best books on the subject.

And studied it?

O no: I have not read a page in it.

This is the way too, in which you study natural history?

Yes: I have bought Reaumur's works, and set them on my shelves.

Well: but are you good humoured?

O yes: mightily so, when I am pleased and entertained.

But a trifle puts you out of humour?

Yes, perhaps it does: but then, I am ten times more out of humour with myself than with other people.

So that, upon the whole, you are satisfied with your temper?

Very tolerably, as the world goes.

And do not you think yourself at all vain?

I do not think, what is commonly called vanity, so terrible a thing, as it is generally reckoned.

What do you mean by this?

I mean, that if it were possible, people ought to be as well acquainted with their own characters, at least, as with those of other persons; and therefore ought to know their good qualities, as well as their faults.

This, in itself, is not vanity: but it is the ready path to it.

How so?

If you were standing on a high hill, from whence you had two very different views one adorned with all that can make a landscape beautiful; the other leading your

eye through barren moors, dreary caverns, and frightful precipices: which do you think you should spend most time in looking at?

The answer is a very clear one: If I had no interest in either of the views, I should admire the fine landscape, and perhaps take a copy of it.

Well, but suppose them both in your own estate? You seem to think that would make some difference, in your way of proceeding.

Yes to be sure, a very great one. In that case I should spend the greatest part of my time in considering, by what methods I could level the precipices, render the barren heaths fruitful, and make that part of my estate as useful and delightful as the other: but still it would be necessary to observe the other prospect, for this very purpose of imitating it.

If you had not added this last reason for looking at the gay side of the view, you had proved, what was far from your intention, that it is our faults, and not our per-

fections, which ought to claim our attention.

There are twenty reasons for this, besides that which I mentioned. To continue your allegory: with what spirit do you think, it would be possible for a man to set about so difficult a work, as those improvements must be, if he did not know, that he had an estate sufficient to support the expence, and an agreeable place to retire to, when he was wearied with his less pleasing employment?

This is but one of the twenty.

But it is strong enough to be equal to half a score of less weight. However, you shall have another—

There is no need of it. I am sensible that a man ought to know the true value of what he possesses, both that he may enjoy it, with due gratitude to the giver, and that he may take sufficient care, to preserve it at least, and perhaps to improve it still further. But when this is granted you will allow me, that it is very disagree-

able for a rich man, to be always boasting of the greatness of his estate, and the magnificence of his palaces.

Most certainly. Nor is it less disgustful to hear a man, who is well known to all the world to have a very considerable fortune, always complaining of his poverty, and, under a feigned humility, concealing, the most hateful pride.

So that, upon the whole, all extremes ought to be avoided, even though, sometimes, they may seem to border upon a virtue.

This is the rightest conclusion in the world: but the misfortune is, that it is no new discovery of ours, but has been the allowed, and wise precept of all ages *.

That does not make it at all the less valuable to us. Do not you think, we should be much happier in being able to follow the maxim, than in being able to give it?

I should wish to be capable of both.

* Virtus est medium vitiorum et utrinque reductum.
Hor. Epist. i. 18.

Pray, my dear, how old are you?

Eighteen last May *.

You have lived eighteen years in the world, you say: pray may I enquire what you have done in all that time?

My life has not, as yet, been one of much action. I have been chiefly employed in laying in provision of knowledge and sentiments, for future years.

Well: shall I examine your magazine? you will have occasion for it all, and ought to have it chosen, with the utmost care.

Which will you look into first, my heart or my memory? Here are the keys of both.

Your memory is next at hand. It is a pretty cabinet, and not one of the smallest size: but I have seen a japan cabinet kept in much better order, though it was filled only with shells.

I wish you would help me to set the drawers, a little in order. What do you meet with in the first?

* If, as it seems Miss Talbot was only eighteen when she wrote this dialogue, she must have posessed a surprising knowledge of the human heart, and an uncommon justness of reasoning for that early time of life.

Fragments of all sorts and kinds. Truly I think it is like a museum: there are some valuable things in it, but they are almost hid amongst mere trash.—I need look no further. I perceive already, that your memory is so idly filled, that your wish of giving wise maxims, is a very wild one. So I will conclude, my dear, with advising you, to be very well contented, if you can but follow those of other people.

DIALOGUE III.

Danger of too much Prosperity without the Assistance of real Friends.

COME to my assistance, my friend, my adviser. I feel myself oppressed and low-spirited, to the greatest degree; all my thoughts have a disagreeable turn; my employments seem burthensome, and my amusements insipid. A moment's serious conversation with you, seems the only thing that is likely to give me relief.

I should little have thought, that your situation in life required relief, or wanted any assistance, to make you sensible of its agreeableness.

I know, that I have every reason, except that which arises from merit, to think myself the happiest creature in the world: and nobody can be more fully and more grate-

fully sensible of it than I am: nor is it my reason that complains.

It is not then your situation in life, that sinks your spirits.

It is the very situation, that answers Cowley's wish *, and mine: nor would I change with the greatest princess.

Nor is it the want of friends to make that situation agreeable.

In this respect, you know, that no mortal was ever so remarkably happy as I am. Nobody had ever, I believe, the advantage of such amiable examples of affectionate care, guided by such excellent sense and goodness. I feel too much upon this article to express it at all well: and my thoughts flow in so fast, that I cannot find words for them. But I was going to add, that nobody ever wanted this advantage so much as I do, whose too easy temper might, perhaps insensibly, follow a bad example, if fortune had thrown it in my way.

* See his Poem so called, p. 79. of Tonson's edition of 1721.

But however that be, of this I am sure, that never was a mind so helpless, so distressed as mine would be, if it had been left in this wide world, without guides, who possess all my love and confidence.

Is it bad health, then, that prevents your enjoying the happiness, that seems to attend on all your steps?

Nothing less: I never knew a painful illness. My sleeps are sweet, and uninterrupted, and those slight disorders, to which I am sometimes liable, only serve to make me sensible of the value of the great share of health and ease, which I for the most part enjoy: and to show me the most engaging instances of goodness, in those about me. I speak this so seriously that I believe I scarce ever had a fever or cough in my life, that did not occasion me more pleasure than uneasiness: and the hours of retirement they have afforded me, are none of the least obligations which I have to them *.

* To a well regulated mind suffering will appear to be at least as beneficial a gift of God as happiness is. So sung our moral Poet:

Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

As you Like it.

DIALOGUE IV.

Of the Danger and insinuating Nature of Vanity.

WHAT is vanity?

Ask your own heart.

And is it very blameable?

It destroys all the merit of every thing that is good: and all the grace of every thing that is amiable.

But may not one love to be commended?

According as the commendation is.

Methinks, now, it would be more vanity to be so self-sufficient, as not to wish the suffrages of good and wise people, to make one satisfied, that ones conduct is right.

But what can you say for the pleasure you feel upon being commended for trifles, or approved by idle people?

Why, it is but common good nature to wish to please every body, without exception, so far as it may innocently be done.

Yet favour, you know, is deceitful.—And so far for trifles, and in things most important, remember the strict and solemn charge, that we do not our good actions before men, to be seen of them.

Yet we are as strictly charged to let our light shine before them, and to set them a good example for the honour of religion.

Most true. The golden medium must be found, nice as it is to hit; our highest interest, our all depends upon it. If praise be our aim, praise, the poor praise of wretched men shall be our barren reward. Yet if timourously we hide our one talent in a napkin, even that shall be taken away from us.

How dreadful the thoughts of missing that only approbation, which it should be the business of our life to deserve! N natural desire of the friendship and good-

will of our fellow-creatures can stand in competition with that fear.

Happy the cloystered life, where the world is quite shut out: and piety and virtue are exercised in solitude and silence without any visible eye to observe them!

That sure is an extreme, the extreme of the buried talent. Let me tell you what I think must be the only rule to go by.

Oh! tell it: no sound can be so welcome.

The rule of duty. Attend solely to that, and let all self-reflections alone.

How! never examine my conduct? Never call my follies to account?

Yes: but have you never read (with regard to virtues) of "forgetting the things "that are behind, and ever pressing for-"ward?"

Well: yet in an hour of sickness, adversity, distress, may no glad hope from the remembrance of having always acted from a sincere right intention, however

imperfectly pursued, cast its reviving ray athwart the gloom?

The comforts of a good conscience are no vanity. There is in them an *important reality.* But cordials, in the day of health, are poisons.

Then be particular: what is this rule of duty?

Whatever the exigence of the present circumstance most immediately and clearly demands. Pursue always one strait path, without ever stepping out of the way, either to attract observation, or to avoid it.

What is the rule in cases of charity?

Chuse to do good in the most private manner, whenever that is a matter of choice. But as this is, in many cases, quite impossible, do as quietly as you can, all the good that is incumbent on you: that is, all the good you are capable of, in your station, and without interfering, where you absolutely ought not to interfere. If you meet with commendation for it, be if possible so much the more humble: as know-

ing those seeds of vanity to be in you, that may, upon the slightest praise, have such a sad effect, as to render the best you have done, less than nothing.

Alas, it is terrifying to consider, how many persons have fallen, from not inconsiderable advancement in goodness, through mere presumption, and self-opinion! And yet can one help wishing to please?

No certainly: there would be something savage in a contrary disposition. But then, look to it, that this desire be free from vanity. It may be quite so.

Can it be without some self-complacence in its gratification?

It cannot be without some sense of pleasure: but from what? *Self*, in every one of us human creatures, is the wretchedest, the poorest of beings. The pleasure results from a grateful reflection on the fulness and bounty of that gracious being, whose gift alone is every thing, that can give us delight, with every capacity of tasting it.

In this view then, we may innocently desire, that his gifts of some good qualities to us, should be the instruments of conveying his gift also of some benefit or pleasure to our fellow-creatures; and that in return, they should, in a lower degree, be pleased with *us*.

I think so indeed.

But what say you to the duty of setting a good example, and contributing, so far as private persons can, to keep virtue and religion in countenance?

It is surely a very important one. But it requires a daily, hourly guard over the heart, to see that no secret vanity poisons the good intention.

And what is to be said of affability, good-humour, easy behaviour, and endeavouring to make ourselves agreeable?

Let but your whole behaviour flow uniformly from one fixed principle of duty, and you may always be secure. Be therefore equally affable to all kinds of people: study to please even those who are far from pleasing you: make yourself agreeable to

those, whose praise you are sure you do not seek. Study to oblige the heavy, the low, the tedious; and in whatever company you are, never aim at what is called shining. Do all this, and you may very allowably strive to please in agreeable company too: and may be satisfied you act from sociable good humour, and not from vanity.

But tell me: is it possible to see one's self in the right, and another in the wrong, without feeling a little superiority?

Yes: if you will consider the matter a little coolly over, you will see it to be very possible to adhere to your own better judgment, without the least triumph, and indeed with the truest humility.

Instruct me, I beseech you.

Consider first, this very inclination to be over-pleased, is a very dangerous weakness: one that you are ashamed to own, since any expressions of self-esteem are contrary to all rules of true politeness; and true politeness has its foundation in the nature of things. Therefore, whenever you feel

any sentiment, that you should be ashamed to express, be assured that they ought equally to be ashamed of indulging it in silence. The first emotions of the mind are, indeed, in some measure, involuntary: the giving encouragement to them is all, for which we shall be accountable, and the thought may very commendably pass through the mind, that becomes faulty if it dwells there *. Self-applause of any thing ever so praise-worthy is like Orpheus conducting Eurydice. It must needs accompany it: but if the pleasure of looking back and admiring be indulged, the fair frail object vanishes into nothing.

So: while you take breath after that simile, let me ask a few more questions.

I have not done with the last yet. You will say, how can we be even the more humble for seeing other people's faults?

Not improbably.

Why: are we not partakers of the self-

* Evil into the mind of God or man
May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
No spot or blame behind.

Par. Lost, Book v.

same erring nature? Are not we as liable to err as they?

No: surely there is a difference between good and bad, knowing and ignorant, prudent and rash.

Is there? Well: what do you imagine then of our first parents, formed in the highest perfection of uncorrupted nature, conversant daily with celestial visitors, and by them instructed?

I see your inference, and it is strictly just.—They fell.—What then are we? Yet we in this blessed period of the world, in this its last two thousand years, have higher advantages, and surer supports and stronger assistances.

Most true. But are these to make us vain, or to make us humble?

Humble, I own it. We have nothing that we can call our own: nothing that pride and self-conceit may not forfeit: and the greater our advantages, the more terrifying is the possibility of losing them.

Reflect, in every history you read, what impression it leaves on you of the gross of

mankind. Then think, all these passions, all these weaknesses are originally, more or less in every one of us. If you were still liable to the infection of the small-pox, and were hourly exposed to it in a town, where it raged among almost all the inhabitants, with what kind of sentiments should you see them labouring under all its dreadful circumstances, and what kind of triumph and self-approbation should you feel, from your own high health, and smooth complexion?

I should only, with fear and trembling, double my caution to preserve them, if possible.

And were you safe got through the illness, how strong would be your sympathy with those yet suffering?

Yet might I not, and ought I not to prescribe to them such methods of cure, or even of present relief and ease, as I had experienced to be most successful?

Yes: but would the praise be your's, or your physician's?

All characters upon record are not thus

terrifying. We partake the same nature with saints and heroes.

Can that raise any vanity? A noble and an honest pride it may: a glorious, a laudable ambition to imitate their virtues. But to see others of our own nature mounted up so high, our eye can scarcely follow them, is surely to us, poor, dull, and weak creatures, of short sight and feeble pinion, mortifying enough.

You teach me the best lesson, that can be learned from history, a deep, a practical, and unfeigned humility. Society with all its various scenes will teach the same: and all those things, which if vanity engross us, minister so abundantly to self-conceit, contempt, disdain, and every evil disposition of the heart, will, if humility be our directress, heighten in us every right affection. Our hearts will overflow with gratitude to our supreme Benefactor, and pour themselves out in the most earnest desires of his continual assistance and protection. They will melt with the kindest commiseration to our er-

ring fellow-creatures: and they will, without forming one ambitious scheme, be most happily and meekly content with whatever situation Providence allots us.

The disposition of humility being thus valuable, let me add one consideration more, which may help to confirm it, and may teach us to avoid that great danger it incurs, from our knowing ourselves at any time in the right. The more strong we are in our opinion, the more lively our dislike is of the opposite error, fault or folly, the more humbled we should be at the thought, (which in general is a certain fact, though we are blind perhaps as to the particulars) that however right we are in *this* instance, in some others, too probably in very many others, we are quite as much in the wrong, as those we now despise and blame. Error is just as ugly in us, as in them: If our sense of it be a stronger, uglier still and more unpardonable. And yet how many have fallen themselves into

the very faults, they most violently condemned:

How true is all this! Let me add to it a thought, that just now rises to my mind, or rather a whole group.

It is true, the subject is inexhaustible: but our time you know was limited, and the clock is just striking.

DIALOGUE V.

On the Nature of human Happiness.

LISAURA was complaining one day to Paulina, that happiness was no where to be found. How do you contrive, said she, to be so cheerful and easy, so constantly contented in your appearance? When, I am convinced, that at the bottom, you must have some lurking dissatisfaction, some concealed uneasiness, that secretly diffuses its venom over your enjoyments?

It is true, said Paulina, my history is pretty extraordinary, and my life, has been crost by a thousand accidents, that reason and religion apart, would make my happiness appear doubtful enough. But prithee, Lisaura, how do you come to suspect

it, who, I am persuaded, know little of my real story, and are young enough to judge of the sincerity of other people's appearance, by your own.

Why, it is from that very cause you name, replied Lisaura. In all the bloom of health and youth, in all the ease of situation imaginable, I still perceive a discontent, that preys upon my heart. Sometimes, I am anxious for the long futurity even of common life, that lies before me: that lies, like a wild unknown and barren plain, wrapt up in thick fogs of uncertainty. Sometimes, I lose myself in melancholy reflections on the past. My cares, and attentions, which then so busily engaged me, seem now such a heap of impertinencies, and follies, that I sicken at them, and at myself. And then, what a strong presumption do they give one, even against those of the present hour! That present hour, how vain is it, how uneasy, what a very trifle will entirely sour it! With all this, any body that considered my situation in life, would pronounce me

happy. How then can I be secure of the happiness of any other person?

Shall I tell you, answered Paulina, why you are not sure of your own?

Oh most willingly, cried Lisaura.

Well then, resumed Paulina—but come my dear, tell me a little of the assembly you were at, last week.

The transition is a little hasty, said Lisaura, smiling.

No matter for that, you will lose nothing by it, in the end: perhaps I may give you a more studied discourse in the afternoon.

Well then, what can I tell you, but that I was fatigued to the greatest degree; and after long expectation, and five hours vain pursuit of amusement, came home, at last, utterly dissatisfied.

Amusement! That is a very general word: in what shape did you think, that it was to appear to you?

Lisaura coloured, and Paulina went on.

Your mistake, dear Lisaura, in life, is the very same, that it was in this assem-

bly, and will lead you into the same dissatisfied satiety. You, not you only, but most young people, form to yourself a general and vague idea of happiness, which, because it is uncertain in its being, is as variable as your temper: so that whenever you meet with any thing that does not exactly suit the present humour, you imagine you have missed of happiness: and so indeed you have; but quite in a different way. The perfect idea of happiness, belongs to another world: as such it is always to be kept in view, and therein consists the point of *human* happiness, which no vicissitudes of human affairs can alter.

But human happiness has separate from this, a very real existence, and has distinguishing characteristics of its own. One of these is imperfection: and a necessary one it is to be known. Our business, in this world, was not to sit down, and be satisfied, but to rub on through many difficulties, and through many duties, with just accommodations enough to support us

among them, in a cheerful frame of mind; such a cheerful and easy frame of mind, as is at all times disposed to relish the beauties of nature, and the comforts of society, though not enough attached to them, to make the parting difficult.

To form any other notion of happiness than this, is a folly that will punish itself. Duty excepted, all the concerns of human life are of slight importance: and when once we have possessed our minds of that belief, all those mysterious phantoms, that gave us such real anxiety, will immediately disappear. The opinion of the world, figure, obscurity, poverty, wealth, contempt, fear, pain, affliction, will appear to be momentary concerns, and therefore little worth long hours of serious thought. Yet all these things are worth so much, that just as far as reason directs us, it is matter of duty to pursue, or avoid them. But when choice has nothing to do, content is every thing. Content did I say? I should have added, gratitude; for much, indeed, the state even of this world de-

serves. For that, however, I will refer you to Dr. Barrow. He lies upon my table, above stairs: and has something in his stile so sweet, so strong and animated, that I cannot recommend you a better companion.

I have often been charmed with him at home, replied Lisaura, and, as fond as you see me of idle amusement, I am not insensible to the excellencies of so grave an author. I have been pleased to hear very good judges call him the English Demosthenes: and I have felt a secret delight in hearing applied to this noble orator, who (in spite of those peculiar expressions, which the copiousness of his diction seems to call in, from all parts) has so often warmed me with sentiments unknown before, what Longinus says of the other, that one might as well face the dazzling lightening, as stand against the force of his eloquence.——Bless me, how do I run on! You were teaching me to be happy, pursue the lesson. I have done.

I'll tell you then, my dear Lisaura: at

tend to me. Convinced by reason and religion, that the evils of life are mere phantoms, prepare yourself with resignation, to submit to them, with constancy to support them. To lay in such a stock of strength, you must call in the assistance of many a leisure hour, of many a serious thought, of many an earnest resolution. By these means, all will grow clear in your own mind: reflection will become your best friend, and most agreeable companion, and whatever destiny attends you, you will acquiesce in it with pleasure.

But your misfortune is that of a splenetic constitution: a day's slight disorder, a heavier temperament of the air immediately affects you so, as to alter, to your fancy, the whole frame of nature. Fix it well in your mind, that these gloomy imaginations are deceitful. The bountiful Creator was not mistaken, when pleased with his completed work, he declared that "all was good." The scheme of Providence and nature is infinitely so; and its contemplation is an inexhaustible source of

delight. Life has its gloomy scenes, but to the good, they only prove an awful exercise of duty supported, all the while, by the assurance of reward. Life has its cheerful moments too, which to the good, no sorrow can embitter. Thus whilst the pleasures of religion, of benevolence, of friendship, of content, of gratitude, of every innocent gaiety, of free society, of lively mirth, of health, and all those infinite objects of delight, which smiling nature offers us; whilst these are real and substantial enjoyments, that ill, which we might fear, from the deprivation of some of them, and even of life itself, is proved to be a mere imaginary terror. This, we have numberless opportunities of knowing. But, blinded by passion, or weakened by constitution, we perpetually run into the common mistake. We form, to ourselves, such a false idea of human happiness, that when we might behold, and be favoured by the goddess herself, we fly from her in a fright because she is not adorned just with those trappings, in which our fancy

had drest her out. Restless we still shift from place to place, to find what we do not know, when we see it: and restless we shall ever be, if for a fit of the spleen, or an unanswered wish, we imagine, that a just degree of happiness is not within every body's reach. My dear Lisaura, if you have any sense of gratitude to that Providence, which formed you for happiness, avoid this gloomy error. Let refined reason fix your judgment, and then, let common sense direct your practice.

OCCASIONAL THOUGHTS.

TALKING over idle vexations, only make them worse.

Every day should be single, unconnected with the rest, and so bear only the weight of its own vexations *.

Never make a group of them, nor look backwards or forwards on a series of disagreeable days; but be always content to make the best of the present.

Every day try to do what you can, and try in earnest, and with spirit. Scorn to be discouraged; and if one scheme fails, form another, as fast as a spider does webs. But never be anxious or uneasy: and if the day be very unpropitious, and nothing will do, even be contented, and easy, and cheerful, as having done the best you could. For, perpetually trying and aiming to do

* Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.
Matt. vi. 34.

proper things, keeps up the spirit of action which is the important point, and preserves you from the danger of falling into heartless indolence, to the full as well as if you really did them: and as for the particular things themselves, it is not a pin matter. But always carry an easy smiling look, and take nothing to heart.

There is scarcely any thing which a sincere endeavour, directed, by the hearty conviction of real duty, will not in time accomplish: since an endeavour so directed will be accompanied by persevering humble prayer: and to persevering prayer, joined with sincere endeavours, success is infallibly promised.

Considering life in its great and important view as the probation for a passage to eternity—and this is the just and true way of considering it—of what signification is it, whether it be passed in town or country: in hurry or in retirement: in pomp or gaiety, or in quiet obscurity? Of none: any further than as these different situations hurt or improve the mind:

and in either of them a right mind may preserve, or even improve itself.

What is then of consequence? Why, that wherever, or however life is past, it should be reasonably and happily: now to this nothing is necessary but a true practical sense of religion, an easy good humour, cheerful indifference to trifles of all kinds, whether agreeable or vexatious: and keeping one's self above them all, suitably to the true dignity of an immortal nature.

Now in a quiet private life one certainly may be reasonable, religious, friendly, good-humoured, and consequently happy.

In great life one may be thus good too, and very useful besides, and consequently very happy also. But this way of life is more dangerous, and has too strong a tendency to dissipate the mind, and deprave the heart.

Upon the whole, every state of life is equal. Providence orders all: and therefore in every one, those who cheerfully, and resignedly accommodate themselves to its orders, may, and must be happy. Why

then this vain care and anxiety, about what it does not belong to us to look forward to? The good and evil, and the right improvement of the present day, is what it is our business to attend to. If we make the best of that, we are sure all will, and must go well. If we put ourselves by vain distrust and useless foresight, out of a right temper to-day, every to-morrow will be the worse for it.

We had need often perpetually to be recollecting what are our duties, and our dangers, that we may fulfil the one, and avoid the other: but never with anxious or uneasy forecast. We must consider the difficulties of the state of life we are likely to be in, not because every other state of life has not as many, for all are pretty equal, but because those peculiarly belong to us.

Dwelling much in our thoughts on other people's unreasonableness, is a sort of revenge, that like all other revenge, hurts ourselves more than them. However, to talk over things sometimes a little rea-

sonably, and see how the truth stands, is a very allowable indulgence: but it must not be allowed too often.

Trying to convince people in cases where they are prejudiced, though ever so unreasonably, be it by temper, humour or custom, is a vain and an idle attempt. One should be satisfied if one can, quietly and unperceived, over-rule those prejudices, where it is necessary in practice; and not aim at the poor triumph of showing them, that they are in the wrong, which hurts, or puts them out of humour.

It is mere cheating one's self to take things easily and patiently at the time, and then repine and complain in looking back upon them. This is to enjoy all the pride and self-applause of patience, and all the indulgence of impatience

PASTORAL I.

Enquiry into the Happiness or Misery of a Shepherd's Life.

THE sun was hid by wintry clouds: the wind blew sharp and cold: the flocks were browzing on the heath, when Colin and Thyrsis, two young Shepherds, who kept them, sat down upon a bank beneath the shelter of a holly bush, and fell into much discourse. Methinks, said Thyrsis, it is but a sad life, that we poor wretches lead, exposed at all times to the severities of the weather: in Summer parched with heat, and pinched by frosts in Winter. While other young people are diverting themselves in the villages, we roam about solitary here, on the wild common, and have nothing to attend to, but our straggling sheep.

And yet, answered Colin, as hard as our life is, you see how old Alcmon loves it; who has fed his own flocks for fifty years, and maintains that he is happier than a king.

I am, replied Thyrsis, but newly come into this country, and have little knowledge of the neigbouring Shepherds: but I should be glad to see one, who could convince me I was happy.

See then, said Colin, where Alcmon comes hither most opportunely. And thereupon calling to the good old man, father, cried he, here is a young Shepherd, who wants your instructions how to live contented.

Son, said the old man, sitting down by them, I accept of that name, and of the office you have given me; for I wish well to all young people: and as I am happy myself, I would fain have others so.

A hard task you will have father, interrupted Thyrsis, to make people happy, who have no one enjoyment of diversion in life; but must slave out our day in the

service of their masters, who divert themselves the while, and live at ease.

Good Thyrsis, said Colin, listen but to Alcmon, and you will be convinced, as I have been.

Nay rather, said Alcmon, let him make his complaint to me: do you answer him from your own experience, and which ever of you best defends his own cause, shall come and sup with me at night. There we will enjoy ourselves in honest mirth by a warm fire, and forget all the toils of the day. Thyrsis agreed to the proposal and began.

Thyrsis. Alas how gloomy are the skies! How hollow is the whistling of the wind in December! Are these the scenes to entertain a youthful fancy? The trees are stript of all their leaves: the very grass is of a russet brown. The birds sit silent and shivering on the branches. All things have an air of poverty and desolation. Alas how tasteless is the shepherd's life! His meals are short, and his sleep soon interrupted. He rises many hours before

the cheerful day begins to dawn; and does not return home, till the cold night is far advanced.

Colin. But then how delightful is the early spring! How reviving the advances of summer! The sky grows clear, or is only overspread with thin, white, curdling clouds. Soft showers descend upon the withered grass, and every meadow seems to laugh. The gay flowers spring up in every field, and adorn it with beautiful colours. The lambkins frisk around us, and divert us with their innocent gaieties. The shepherd's life is as innocent as theirs. If his meals are plain, they are hearty: if his sleep is short, it is both sound and sweet. He rises refreshed in the morning, and sees the day come on by gradual advances, till the whole east is streaked with purple clouds. When night succeeds, he beholds the immense vault of heaven: he admires the lustre of the stars, and in vain tries to reckon their number. While they glitter over his head, he has no cause to fear any ill influences from them,

since his whole life is harmless and industrious, and renders him the care of Providence.

Thyrsis. O with what envy do we see the young hunters hastening by us in pursuit of their youthful prey! While we are confined, as it were, to one spot, they measure with swift steps the whole fair country round; and the speed of the horses seems equal to that of the winds. The hills echo to the enlivening sound of their horns, and the cheerful cry of their dogs. The timorous hares scud away before them: they feel not the coldness of the air: and when they return home, they have all things in plenty. We have the same dispositions, for mirth and entertainment with them —Why, why should there be this difference between one man's station, and another's?

Colin. Why rather, O Thyrsis, O misjudging Thyrsis, do you envy them a pleasure, they so dearly buy? Not long ago, I was tending my flock, upon the brow of the hill. These hunters passed

by me in great mirth, and high gaiety. Amongst them was a very handsome youth, the only son of a fond mother. He guided an unmanageable horse, and guided it without discretion. Just upon the edge of a precipice, the unruly creature took fright.—I saw the youth brought back, lifeless, pale and disfigured. The great possessions to which he was born, were no longer of any avail to him: while I, poor humble shepherd, salute the rising sun, and enjoy life and health.

Thyrsis. Those accidents, timorous Colin, do not happen every day. But at least I may envy those idlers, whom I see, in perfect safety, diverting themselves upon the common. They have no severe master to give an account to, for their time: they are well clothed and better fed.

Alcmon. O Thyrsis, they have a master, to whom they are accountable, superior to those sort of masters you mean. A master that looks upon us with as favourable an eye, as he does upon them. A master, to whom the greatest king upon his throne,

is but an upper servant, and has a heavier task, because he is able to do more than you and I. Those idlers, whom you envy, are perhaps not so happy, as you fancy them to be.

Colin. I saw Clorinda cross some meadows, the other day, with an air that expressed little happiness. There were a large company of them together: all people of prosperous fortunes, all idle, and at ease. The young nymph went a good way before all her companions: her garments glittered in the sun, with silk and gold. She seemed to shun conversation: her eyes were fixed upon the ground: her look was pale and melancholy, and, every now and then, she would sigh, as if her heart was breaking.

Thyrsis. Clorinda's melancholy is easily understood. Urania and she were once inseparable companions: that favourite friend of her's is lately dead: I heard Dametas tell the unhappy story. But Clorinda has a thousand consolations. If one of us loses his friend or brother, he loses

his all. We have nothing else that fortune can deprive us of.

Alcmon. Thyrsis, I like your ingenuity: you show some skill in defending a bad cause *. Colin and you shall both come home with me. When it is no longer a matter of dispute, I hope you will come over to the happier opinion. Believe me, shepherd, we, of low condition, are free from a multitude of unknown evils, than afflict the rich and great, and are more terrible to them than storms and tempests are to us; more grievous than labour, and honest and industrious poverty.

* Perhaps it may even be thought more skill than his opponent. The defence in this dialogue seems unusually feeble, and the writer's arguments much less conclusive than they generally are. It is to be hoped that much more might have been said on that side of the question.

PASTORAL II.

On the Comforts of virtuous Poverty.

PHILLIS and Damaris were two country lasses, the pride of the village where they lived: both handsome to perfection, but exceedingly different. The unaffected Damaris had no attention but to assist the infirmities of an aged parent, whom severe illness confined to his cottage, while she tended his flock, by the wood-side. Her hands were generally employed in some useful work: and while she knit, or spun to procure her old father a more tolerable subsistence, the cheerfulness of her songs exprest a contented heart. Her dress, though very poor, was always neat and clean: she studied no ornament in it, and if the neighbours commended her person, she lent them very little attention.

Phillis had been bred up under a careless mother. She was exceedingly pretty, and knew it mighty well. On holidays nobody so spruce as she. Her hat was wreathed with flowers or ribbands: every fountain was consulted for her dress, and every meadow ransacked to adorn it. From morning till night she was dancing, and sporting on the green: all the shepherds courted and admired her, and she believed every word they said. Yet she felt many a discontent. Sometimes her garland would be less becoming than she wished it: sometimes she would fancy that a favourite shepherd slighted her: or that a newer face was more admired than her's. Every day was spent in the pursuit of gaiety: and every day brought with it some disquiet. She was one morning sitting very pensive under a poplar, tying up a nosegay, when she heard Damaris, who was concealed from her, only by the shade of some bushes, singing, with a merry heart, a song in praise of industry. Phillis could not help interrupting her in

the midst of it: and when she went towards her, found her busy in plying the distaff, which was fixed in her side: when thus the gay maid began.

Phillis. How is it possible, Damaris, that you should be always so merry in leading a life of such drudgery? What charms can you find in it? How much better would it become your years to be dancing at the may-pole, where some rich farmer's son might probably fall in love with you?

Damaris. Ah Phillis, I prefer this way of life, because I see you very unhappy in your's. For my own part I have never a moment's uneasiness. I am sensible, I am doing what I ought. I see myself the comfort of a good old father, who supported my helpless infancy, and now wants this return of duty in his decrepid age. When I have pinned the fold at night, I return home, and cheer him with my sight. I dress his little supper, and partake it with more pleasure, than you have at a feast. He in the mean time tells me

stories of his younger days, and instructs me by his experience. Sometimes he teaches me a song like that I was singing just now; and on holidays, I read to him out of some good book. This, Phillis, is my life. I have no great expectations, but every cheerful hope, that can make the heart light and easy.

Phillis. Well Damaris: I shall not dispute your taste. My father is well enough, by his own labour, to provide for his family: and my mother never set us the example of working. 'Tis true we are poor: but who knows what good fortune may throw in our way? Youth is the time for mirth, and pleasure: and I do not care how hardly I fare, provided I can get a silken lining to my hat, and be the Lady of the May next year.

Damaris. O Phillis, this is very pretty for the present: but in what will it end? Do you think that smoothness of face will always last? Yon decrepid old woman, that limps upon her crutches, was once, they say, as handsome as you. Her youth

passed without engaging any body in a real affection to her: yet her good name was lost, among the follies she engaged in. Poverty and age came on together: she has long been a burden to the village, and herself. If any neighbour's cow is ill, all suspicions of witchcraft fall upon her. She can do nothing to maintain herself: and every body grudges her what she has.

Phillis. Ill-natured Damaris, to compare me with a hag, that all the country abhors. I wish you would come to the pastimes: they would put you in a better humour. Besides you would there hear what the shepherds say to this Phillis, whom you are pleased to despise so.

Damaris. I do not despise you Phillis: but I wish you well, and would fain see you as happy as myself. That fine green stuff, your gown is made of, would become you much better if it was of your own spinning.—But I talk like an old man's daughter, and am little heeded. Go pretty butterfly, and rejoice in the Summer of thy days: let me, like the homely but

industrious ant, lay up some provision for the Winter *.

* The writer may be judged from this interesting dialogue to have understood the comforts arising from the performance of duty in her own sex, better than she did those of the other.

PASTORAL III.

The Happiness of religious Hope.

IMAGINE, honest friends, that instead of a little book, I am a good humoured neighbour, come to spend an hour with you in cheerful chat. Do not look upon me as one that is come to read you grave lectures of religion and good behaviour: but give me the welcome of an agreeable companion. Is it in a summer's holiday, you take me up? Come, let us go out into the fields, sit down under some shady tree, and while the sun shines, and the birds sing round us, let us talk over all we have to say. Or is it a winter's evening? Draw your seats about the chimney; throw on another faggot, make a cheerful blaze, and let us be comfortable. What is it, to us here, if the wind blows and the

rain beats abroad? Since we cannot work, let us divert ourselves, but let us divert ourselves in a harmless reasonable way, that we may turn this idle time to as good account as the busiest.

Come: what shall we talk of? Of happiness? there cannot be a pleasanter subject. Where is it to be had, this happiness, and how shall we come by it?

Where is it to be had? Why, every where, so we can but command our thoughts, and do our duty: serve God cheerfully, and make the best of our lot.

It may be, good neighbour, *you* are old, lame, sickly, have a large family, and little to maintain them. Alas, poor neighbour! yet still it is ten to one you may be happier than many a nobleman, and many a prince. I suppose you honest and religious. Why then the better half is secure: your mind is easy. You have no load upon your conscience, and no need to be afraid even of death. But cannot your condition be, any way,

mended? Content is a good thing: yet success in honest endeavours is a better. There is no need of setting sadly down, and acquiescing in a miserable lot, till, upon mature consideration, we find it to be really the will of Providence that we should: and then, let me tell you, dear friend, God's will is kinder to us than our own wishes. When we submit patiently to sorrows and hardships, not out of laziness, nor out of despair, nor not of thoughtless helplessness, we then trust our souls to him, in well doing. We act a commendable part, which our great master will approve: and we may have a cheerful confidence in his mercy, that all things shall work together for our good. Come: pluck up your spirits my friend, and let us see whether the part that falls to you is to mend your condition or to bear it.

First you are old.—Well, that is a fault that time will not mend indeed—but eternity will mend it, honest friend. The period will come when your youth shall be renewed: when you shall be young, and

lusty as an eagle, and these grey hairs and wrinkles shall be succeeded by immortal bloom. In the mean time, so much of your life is well over: you are got so far on your journey, through this vale of tears. You can reflect with pleasure on a great many good actions, and pious dispositions: and it peculiarly becomes old age to meditate much upon those subjects, which are of all others the most noble and delightful. Heaven is the object that should be always in their view. What a prospect is that! What, think, you, should be the joy of a sea-faring man, when, after a long, stormy voyage, he is come within sight of the port? Suppose a young man had an estate left to him, which he had never seen. Suppose he had been travelling a thousand miles to come to it: that he had met with perpetual bad weather, by the way, and dirty roads: that he was faint, and well nigh wearied out: and that just when he comes to the brow of a dry, sandy hill, bleak and unpleasant in itself, but from whence the prospect first opened

upon him, of that fair place, he is going to enjoy. Suppose he sees the tufted woods crowned with the brightest verdure: suppose he sees, among them, glittering spires, and domes, and gilded columns: and knows that all these shall be his own. With what pleasure will he survey the gentle winding rivulets gliding through fertile meadows: the borders gay with flowers of every kind: the parks and forests filled with all sorts of excellent fruits: the castles, and pleasure-houses, which he knows to be rich with magnificent furniture: and what is above all, where he knows that his best and most beloved friends, and a delightful society, whom he longs to be amongst, are waiting with kind impatience to receive him: think you, that he will have leisure to attend to the little inconveniences of the present moment? Will not his thoughts fly forward, faster than his legs can carry him, to this blessed inheritance? Yet how poor are such riches, and pleasures, compared with the certain

expectations *of the poorest old man*, that is pious and virtuous *.

* Surely that critick must be very fastidious, who, after reading this excellent and useful monologue, should make no other observation upon it, but that the reasoning in it will apply equally well to every other situation of life, as to that in which the scene is laid.

A FAIRY TALE.

Education.

A NUMBER of boys were diverting themselves one fine day in a meadow, when a wrinkled old woman came up to them, and stopt their play. Her looks were unpleasing, and her interruption unseasonable. One of the biggest, who had been taught by his tutor to respect her, addrest her very civilly: but of the little urchins some ran away frighted, and hid themselves: and others very insolently laughed at her, and called her old witch. Little George, the youngest of them all, a very pretty, good humoured lad, held by the hand of the eldest, (who, he thought, as he had always been his friend, would protect him) and listened: but a little afraid too, and not much liking either her

looks, or the being hindered of his play: however, he was too well bred to say any thing rude. She smiled, and taking his other hand, do not be afraid of me, my dear child, said she, for though those idle boys yonder call me Crossness, and Severity, my true name is *Instruction*. I love every one of you: and you, my little dear, in particular; and my whole business is to do you good. Come with me to my castle, and I will make you as happy as the day is long.

Little George did not know how to trust her, but as he saw his friend Henry disposed to follow the old lady, he even ventured along with them.

The castle was an old melancholy looking building, and the path to it very much entangled with briars and thistles: but the old woman encouraged them in a cheerful tone to come along: and taking out a large key, which had several strange words engraved upon it, she put it into the door, which immediately flew open, and they entered a spacious hall mag-

nificently furnished. Through this they passed into several apartments, each finer and pleasanter than the other: but to every one they ascended by steep steps, and on every step, strange and unknown words were engraved.

Perhaps you would be glad to know some more particulars of these apartments? and indeed I should have told you, that as soon as they entered the great hall, she made them sit down to a pretty collation of plumb-cakes, biscuits and sweetmeats, which were brought in baskets covered with flowers, by four smiling, rosy cheeked girls, called *Innocence*, *Health*, *Mirth*, and *Good-Humour*. When they were sufficiently refreshed, the old lady returned to them, in a finer dress, and with a much more pleasing look. She had now a wand in her hand, of ivory, tipped with gold, and with this she pointed out to them the ornaments of the room. It was supported by strong, but handsome pillars of adamant: and between the pillars, hung festoons of fruit and flowers.

At the upper end, were niches, with very beautiful statues in them. The principal one was *Truth*. It appeared to be of one entire diamond, and represented the most beautiful woman, that ever eyes beheld. Her air was full of dignity and sweetness: in one hand she held a scepter, in the other a book, and she had an imperial crown on her head. The old fairy gently touched this figure with her wand, and immediately it stepped down from the pedestal, and began to speak. No music was ever so pleasing as the voice of Truth. She addrest herself to our little hero, and examined him in his Catechism. As he had formerly been a little idle, he could not say it so well, as, at that minute, he wished to do.—Little wretch, said the old fairy frowning, why do you answer so stupidly? Have you never been taught? Here was loop-hole through which a boy of a cowardly spirit, might have crept out, by pretending, that his tutor had been in fault, and not himself. But little George scorned to tell a lye: nor could

he be so base as to excuse himself, by accusing an innocent person. Therefore, though trembling for fear of the old fairy, and her wand, he answered, indeed, madam, I have been often bid to learn it, but I loved my diversions so well, that I never could apply to it.——Here the old fairy, smiling, kissed him, and said, my dear child, I forgive your past idleness, in favour of your noble honesty. A fault honestly owned is half amended, and this nymph shall reward you.

Immediately *Truth* gave him a little Catechism bound in silver enamelled, a pocket Bible with ruby clasps, and a small looking-glass in a gold case. In these books, my dear, said she, you shall find constant directions from me, which, if you follow, will make you good, and great, and happy. If you never offend against me, I will be ready to assist you in all difficulties. If ever you should be tempted to offend me, look in this glass. If you see yourself in it your own natural figure, go on contentedly, and be sure you are under

my protectection. But if you see yourself in the form of a slave, and a monster, greasy, ragged, loaded with chains: a double tongue hanging out of your mouth, and a pair of ass's ears on your head, tremble to think, that you are got into the power of the wicked enchanter *Falsehood.* Retract the lye you have told: stand still wherever you are: call out aloud for my assistance: and do not stir from the spot you are in, till I come to help you. So saying, the bright form reascended her pedestal: and four others, who stood on each hand, being touched by the fairy wand, moved towards him.

The first was a young woman clothed in a long white robe, perfectly neat and plain. She had fine flaxen hair, and blue eyes, which were fixed on the ground. A white veil shaded her face: and her colour went and came every minute. She advanced with a slow pace, and spoke in a voice very low, but as sweet as the nightingale's.

My name, said she, is *Modesty.* I have

no merit, but perhaps as you are so young, it may be in my power to be of some little use to you. Before you get to the top of this castle, you will see many strange things, and be bid to do many things, of which you do not understand the reason. But remember, that you are very young, and know nothing: and that every body here is wiser than you. Therefore observe attentively all that you see; and do readily all that you are bid. As you have recommended yourself to *Truth*, we her handmaids are ready to give you all the assistance we can; and you will need it all.

Above all things fear *Disgrace*. It is a filthy puddle in the neighbourhood of this castle, whose stains are not easily wiped off. Those, who run heedlessly, or wilfully into it, after repeated warnings, grow in time so loathsome, that no body can endure them.

There is an enchantress, you will meet with, called *Flattery*, who will offer you a very pleasant cup. If you drink much of

it your head will turn: and while you fancy yourself a most accomplished person, she will touch you with her wicked wand, and immediately you will be metamorphosed into a butterfly, a squib, or a paper-kite. But as, perhaps, you must taste her cup, take this nosegay of violets: and as you find your head a little giddy smell to it, and you will be so refreshed, that she will have no power to hurt you. This little nosegay will defend you also against the magician *Pride*, who in a thousand shapes will try to introduce himself to you, and persuade you to go with him to a high rock, from whence, he will either throw you down some frightful precipices, into the pool of *Disgrace*, or else change you into a lion, or a tyger, or a bear, or into such a huge dropsical figure, that every body shall hate to look upon you: and that you shall not be able to pass through the gates that lead to *Happiness*. When you suspect his coming smell to your voilets, and you will immediately see through his disguise, and at the same time, they shall

make you so little, he shall not see you: and when you are in a crowd, smell to them again, and you shall pass through it without difficulty. I wish I had a better gift to bestow; but accept of my all.

Little George thanked her kindly, and stuck the nosegay in his bosom.

On the pedestal of the next figure, was inscribed *Natural Affection.* Her countenance was sweet and engaging: her garment embroidered with storks, doves, and various pretty animals. She had bracelets on her arms, and fine rings on every finger: every one was the gift of some beloved friend or relation. My dear George, said she, I love you for the sake of your parents. I have a thousand pretty gifts to bestow, and this particularly will be of use to you. She then gave him a small enamelled box, with pictures on every side. When, said she, you are in doubt how to behave, look upon the pictures. They are those of your parents, relations, and friends: being gifted by a fairy, you will see every figure in motion:

and as your papa and mamma, your brothers and sisters seem affected by your behaviour, you will judge whether you are acting right or wrong. I am sure it is your desire always to give them pleasure, and not pain, to be an honour to them, and not a reproach.

The next image that spoke was entirely made of sugar, but a sugar as firm, and almost as clear as chrystal. Her name was *Good Temper*. In her bosom, she had a nosegay of roses without thorns. She took our little friend by the hand, and seeing it scratched from a scuffle he had with his companions, she healed it with a touch; and gave him a small amethyst phial filled with honey and oil of a peculiar kind. Touch your lips with this julep, said she, every morning. Though the phial is small, it is inexhaustible, and you will never more be liable to harm, from any idle quarrel; as you will never say any thing peevish, or provoking, all your companions will love you: and your servants will think it a blessing to live with you.

One figure more remained, and the fairy had no sooner touched it, but down from her pedestal jumped sprightly *Diligence*. She was drest like a huntress. Activity and nimbleness appeared in every limb. She sprung to George, clapped her hands on his shoulders, and immediately there appeared a couple of little wings. These wings, said she, will be of great use to you in ascending the steep steps you will have to go up, by and by. But all wings need frequent pluming: and these will lose all their virtue, if you do not keep them in order every day, by using the talisman, I am going next to give you. This talisman was a golden spur. This, said she, whenever your wings are drooping, (as they will very often, when the old witch *Laziness* approaches, who would metamorphose you into a dormouse) you must run gently into your side, and they will be ready immediately to carry you out of her reach. I am sure, you have too much true courage to fear a little trifling pain, when it will be the means of

gaining you every improvement. Good night, good night, my love, I see you are sleepy, but as soon as you wake in the morning, be sure to make use of your spur.

The good old fairy then led Henry and George into a little neat room, where they went to bed and slept to day-break, dreaming of all the agreeable things they had seen and heard. George did not wake, till Henry was already up and drest: but he waked disturbed, and began to tell his friend his dreams. I thought, said he, that looking out of the window, I saw all my companions at play, and flew out to them directly, to show them those fine things, that the statues had given me. Instead of admiring me, they fell upon me: one seized one fine thing, and another, another; till poor I had nothing left but my wings. What vexed me too, in the scuffle my violets were scattered, the books torn, the pictures spoilt, the glass broke, and the julep spilt. So that they were never the better, though I was so much

the worse. Well, I took to my wings however, and thought I might as easily fly in, as out, and then the good Fairy would give me more pretty things. But no such matter: the windows were shut, the doors were barred and bolted. Owls and bats flew about my head: geese hissed at me, asses brayed at me, monkies chattered in my ears, and I fell down nobody knows whither.

Be thankful, said Henry, that it was only a dream; here are all your pretty things safe; and so saying he gently touched his side, like a true friend, with the spur, and up jumped little George all alive and merry. He read in his books: He with pleasure saw his own honest face in the Glass of Truth: He observed with delight, the pictures of his friends and relations all smiling upon him. While he was thus employed, in stept a sober-looking man, leaning on a staff. My young friends, said he, I am sent to conduct you through the noble apartments of this Castle. A fine conductor indeed, said little George,

who had unfortunately forgot both his violets, and his phial, your crutch, honest man, will keep up rarely with my wings. Your wings, youngster, replied *Application* (for that was his name) will be of little service, unless I lend you a staff to rest upon, which wherever you set it down, will make your footing sure. This speech was unheeded by little George, who already upon the wing, fluttered away. Henry soon overtook him, having quite as good pinions, though he did not boast of them, but stayed first to bring with him the staff, the phial, and the nosegay, against his friend should need them. Little George was now trying to mount up a steep stair-case, which he saw multitudes of his own age ascending. Very eagerly he stretched his wings, whose painted plumage glittered in the sun-beams, and very often just reached the top: but he was greatly surprised to find that he always slid back again, as if he had stood upon a slope of ice, so that hundreds and hundreds had got through the folding

doors above, while he was still but at the bottom. He cried for vexation: gave hard names to the boys that got before him, and was laughed at by them in return. The box of pictures gave him no comfort, for there he saw his father frowning and his mother looking unhappy. At this minute, friendly Henry came to his relief, and giving him the violets, the phial, and the staff, make use of these, said he, and you will easily get up with them, who are now before you. Observe, that they have every one of them, just such a staff, and that, notwithstanding their wings, they can rise but one step at a time. George, who had now touched his lips with the phial, thanked him very kindly, and they mounted several steps, hand in hand. On some were inscribed, *Propria quæ Maribus:* on others *As in Præsenti,* and various other magic verses, which, they just rested long enough on every step to read, and as they ascended, the steps grew easier and easier. George however was a little out of breath, and more than once wished him-

self out of the Castle. Yet he was delighted to find himself almost overtaking the foremost, who had, some of them loitered by the way.

And now he entered into an apartment, more magnificent than any he had ever seen. Thousands of rooms opened, one beyond another, furnished with all the elegance of taste. From every one of these were delightful prospects: but then for a long while, he had not leisure to attend to the strange varieties of rich and uncommon furniture, exciting his curiosity every minute. One long gallery was hung with paintings, so exquisitely fine, that every figure seemed alive: and some of them actually spoke, and amused him with a thousand agreeable stories. Here he saw all the metamorphoses of the Heathen Gods, the adventures of Æneas, and a number of other things that I have not time to describe. A young damsel attended him drest in a gown made of feathers, more gay than the rainbow. She had wings upon her head: she gave him the most

delicious sweet-meats, and he drank out of a sparkling cup, the pleasantest liquor imaginable. This light dish did not quite satisfy a hungry stomach: so that George was not very sorry when, past through the gallery of *Fiction*, his fair conductress *Poetry* consigned him over to the care of a good hospitable old man, in the next apartment, whose table was already covered with wholesome and substantial food. This apartment, called the Saloon of *History*, was by no means so gay as the former: but deserved examination better. The walls were covered with marble, adorned with the finest basso relievos, statues and bustos, of every celebrated hero and legislator, struck the observing eye with veneration. The master of the feast was extremely good-natured, and communicative: and ready to answer every question, that George's curiosity prompted him to ask. He commended him for his love of Truth, and toasted her health, as his own patroness. But, as the old gentleman was, sometimes, a little prolix in his stories, our

young traveller amused himself, every now and then with looking over his treasures. Surveying the box of pictures, he could not help wishing for a nearer sight of the friends they represented. A window, that stood open just by him, and overlooked a delightful play-field, reminded him of his wings. But the recollection of his frightful dream, prevented him from attempting an escape.

At this minute, the Fairy *Instruction* appeared, with a smiling look. I know your thoughts, my dear, said she, and am willing to allow you every reasonable indulgence. I have, in my service, a number of little winged beings, whose business it is to convey my young friends, from time to time, to their beloved homes. In order to your returning safely, accept this key. You must be sure to rub it every morning, that it may not grow rusty, else the characters, that are engraved upon it, will disappear. If your key is kept bright, you need only read the inscription aloud, and, without difficulty you will return to this

very apartment, and be intituled to an honourable reception. But if the key should grow rusty, beware of a disgraceful fall. Let your dream warn you to take care of your precious gifts, and to make a due use of them.

She had scarcely done speaking, before there was a general voice of joy heard through the whole apartment, " the ho- " lidays are come, the holidays are come :" and immediately a number of little cherubims appeared in the air, crowned with garlands, and away with them flew little George : but unluckily in his haste, left, both the staff, and the spur behind him. Indeed at this minute they were needless.

His friends were all ready to receive him with affectionate joy. They commended his improvements, and listened with delight, to his account of the surprising things he had seen : and rejoiced in the marks of favour he had received from excellent and powerful Fairies. He played about all day with his companions, and every thing was

thought of, that could best divert him. In the midst of these amusements, the poor key was in a few days forgot: nor did he recollect it, till one day he saw Henry sitting under a tree, and very diligently brightening up his own. Stupid boy, said giddy George, what do you sit moping there for? Come and play. So I will presently, said Henry: but I must not neglect the means of returning honourably to the good Fairy. Hang the old Fairy, cried George: besides, my key will keep bright enough, I warrant it, without all this ado. However, looking at the key, he found it brown with rust: and sadly his arm ached with the vain endeavour of rubbing it bright; for as he could not succeed in five minutes, down he flung it in despair.

What do you cry for, my pretty master? said a man in a fine coat, who was passing by. George told him his distress. Be comforted said the man, I will give you a gold key set with emeralds, that shall be better by half, and fitter for a young

gentleman of your rank, than that old woman's rusty iron.

Just then, George, who did not want cleverness, began to suspect something: and smelling to his violets, the fine man appeared in his true shape, which was, indeed, no other than that of the magician *Pride*. He was immoderately tall and bloated: his eyes were fierce and malignant: his cheeks were painted, a peacock sat upon his head, a bear and a leopard followed him. In one hand he held an empty bladder, and in the other a fatal wand. His under vest was stained and ragged; but over it he had a pompous herald's coat, with a long train supported by an ugly dwarf, and a limping idiot, whom he turned back continually to insult and abuse. Well was it for little George, that his violets had rendered him invisible. He saw the magician go on to one of his companions, who being destitute of such a defence, immediately became his prey. Take this nosegay, my child, said the wicked wretch, and presented him with a

bunch of nettles, finely gilded, but very stinging. The poor boy had no sooner touched them than his countenance exprest pain: he quarrelled with every body round him: yet the simpleton kept continually smelling to his nosegay, and the more he was nettled, the more quarrelsome he grew. His size too increased in proportion: he became swelled and boated. He grew tall, too tall at once, but it was only by being raised on an enormous pair of stilts, on which he could not walk a step, without danger of tumbling down.

George could not help laughing at his ridiculous figure, but would, out of good nature, have offered him his own bunch to smell to, if those unfortunate stilts had not raised him quite out of his reach. He therefore was making the best of his way back, having first secured his key, when a laughing giddy hoyden called out to him, that she had found a bird's nest. Away with her he ran upon this new pursuit: and from bird's nest to bird's nest, and from butterfly to butterfly they scampered

over the flowery fields, till night drew on. She then persuaded him to go with her to her mother's house, which was but just by, and rest himself.

He found there a lady lolling in an easy chair, who scarce raised her head to bid him welcome. A table however stood by her, ready spread with every kind of dainty, where *Idleness*, for so was his play-fellow called, invited him to sit down: and after supper, he was conducted into a chamber, set round with shelves of play-things, where, in a soft down bed, he slept till very late the next day. At last, though unwillingly, he got up: but for no better purpose than to look over those worthless toys, which he half despised all the while. What, thought he, is this tinsel, and glass and wood, to compare with the rich treasures of the old Fairy's Castle? Neither the old woman here, nor the simpleton her daughter, will answer me a question I ask, nor divert me with such stories, as the very pictures and statues there were full of. Thus thinking, he continued

nevertheless to divert himself with the play-things, and was growing fast back into the love of rattles, and bells, when a sudden panic seized him on seeing in the corners of every shelf, fillagree cages full of dormice. Miserable boy that I am, cried he, this must certainly be the den of *Laziness!* How shall I escape? He tried to stretch his wings: but alas, they drooped, and now, for the first time, he found, and lamented the want of his spur. He ran to the windows: every prospect from thence was desolate and barren, resembling exactly what he had read in his ruby-clasped book, of the field of the sluggard.

In vain did he look for the holidays to transport him from this wretched place. The last of them was already on the wing, and almost out of sight; for it is peculiar to these little beings to approach slowly, but to fly away with amazing swiftness. However, he met with assistance, where he least expected it. A dismal cloud hung almost over his head, which he feared

would every minute burst in thunder; when out of it flew a black eagle, who seized little George in her talons, and in a moment he found himself at the gates of the Castle of Instruction.

Perhaps you may not think his case now, much better than it was before. A little dormouse could have lain snug and warm, in cotton: whereas poor George was forced to stand in the cold, among thorns and briars, vainly endeavouring to read the inscription on his key, which was now, alas, grown rustier than ever. In the mean time he saw most of his companions, his friend Henry one of the foremost, fly over his head, while their polished keys glittered like diamonds: and all of them received into the apartments they came out of, with joyful acclamations. The boy upon stilts, indeed, did not make so good a figure. He reached up to the window, but his false key would not open it: and making a false step, down he tumbled into the dirty pool.

At this minute, the old Fairy looked

out, and calling to George, why do not you, my child, said she, make use of your wings and your key? I am impatient to have you amongst us again, that you may receive finer gifts, and see greater wonders, than any you have ever met with yet.

Here a woman came to him, clothed in hare-skins, and shivering with an ague. She touched him with a cold finger, that chilled his blood: and stammered out these terrifying words, *D d'ont g go int t to the C castle, P punishment is r ready for r y you, r run away.*

Scorn Punishment, and despise it, said *Foolhardiness*, a little pert monkey in a scarlet coat, and mounted upon a goose.

Fear Disgrace, said *Shame*, and with a rose-bush, which she carried, brushed the monkey into the dirty pool, where he lay screaming and chattering, while his goose hissed at him.

Poor George knew not what to do. It once came into his head to make a plausible excuse, and say his key was very bright, but the lock was out of order.

But bethinking himself to apply to his glass, he no sooner saw the ass's ears, than, in honest distress, he called out, O *Truth, Truth*, come to my assistance. I have been very idle, and I am very sorry. *Truth, Truth*, come to my assistance.

He fainted away with terror, as he spoke, but, when he recovered, found himself within the Castle, the bright figure of *Truth* smiling upon him: and *Forgiveness*, another very amiable form, distinguished by a slate, and a sponge, with which she wiped out all faults, caressing him. Indeed she had need, for he felt himself a little stiff, and sore, with some rough methods, that had been used to bring him to himself. These two nymphs consigned him to the care of *Amendment*, who promised never to forsake him, till he got to the top of the Castle: and, under her guidance, he went on very chearfully.

Indeed he was a little vexed at the first steps he came to, on finding himself struck pretty hard by an angry looking man; but when he found, that it was only in order to

return him his staff, and his spur, he thanked him for his friendly blow, and from that time proceeded with double alacrity. He soon overtook his companions again, and you may imagine, how joyful was the meeting, between him and Henry, who loved him too well, not to go on very melancholy, while George had staid behind. How I rejoiced, said he, to see you under the conduct of the lady *Amendment:* now nothing can ever part us more.

The Poetical Gallery, the Saloon of History, afforded them new delight. In every room, through which they past, were tables covered with gems, medals, little images, seals, intaglios, and all kinds of curiosities, of which, they were assured, that the more they took, the more welcome they should be.

But here George was a little perplexed again. His pockets were filled over and over: still, as he came to new treasures, he was forced to throw aside the old ones, to make room: yet was told, that it would not be taken well, if he did

not keep them all. At last he came fortunately into a room of polished steel, where, on a throne of jasper, sat a lady, with a crown upon her head, of the brightest jewels. Upon her robe was woven, in the liveliest colours and perfectly distinct, though in miniature, every thing that the world contains. She had steel tablets in her hand, on which she was always engraving something excellent: and on the rich diadem, that encircled her forehead, was embroidered the word *Memory*.

You could not, said she to George, have applied to a properer person than to me, to help you out of your present difficulty. She then gave him a cabinet, so small, and so light, that he could carry it without the least inconvenience: and, at the same time, so rich and elegant, that no snuff-box, set with diamonds, was ever more ornamented. It had millions of little drawers, all classed and numbered: and in these, he found all the fine things he had been so incumbered with, ranged in their proper order.

The only thing I insist on, said she, is that you will keep your drawers exactly clean, and never litter them with trash. If you stuff them, with what does not deserve a place, they will no longer be capable of containing real treasures: but the bottom of the cabinet will become directly like a sieve: and if *Malice* or *Resentment* ever persuade you, to put in any thing out of their shops, you will soon find every drawer infested with snakes and adders. But above all things value the gifts of *Truth*, *Gratitude*, and *Friendship*, which will fill them with constant perfume, that shall make you agreeable to every body.

Thus furnished, George proceeded joyfully, and ascended from one apartment to another, till he became possest of all the treasures of the Castle. Sometimes *Imagination* led him into delightful gardens, gay with perpetual spring. Sometimes from entrances dug into the solid rock, (on the side of the apartments opposite to the windows) he wandered through the mines of *Science*, and brought from thence, riches

that had not yet been discovered. The *holidays* always found him cheerfully glad to go with them; but not impatient for their approach, and equally glad to return, when they flew back. Whenever he returned, he was received with honour, and crowned with wreaths of bays and laurel. He became a favourite with the Virtues, and the Graces, and at last was led by them to the top of the Castle: where *Reputation* and *Prudence* waited to receive him, and conduct him through a fair plain, that was stretched out along the top of the mountain, and terminated by the glittering temple of *Felicity* *.

* This Fairy Tale, or perhaps more properly, Allegory, which was the delight as well as the instruction of the Editor's youth, would not disgrace even the modern highly improved assistances to education.

IMITATIONS

OF

OSSIAN.

IMITATION I.

WHY dost thou not visit my hall, Daughter of the gentle Smile? thou art in thy hall of joy, the feast of shells is spread: the bards are assembled around. Sad I sit alone, and listen to the beating rain. The gale sounds hollow in the east, but no music comes on the blast, to my solitary ear. The red coals glow sullenly in my grate, but they should blaze cheerfully for thee. Why dost thou not visit my hall, Daughter of the gentle Smile?

Thy fame shall be heard in the song, for the bards assemble at thy call. When I go to the narrow house, silence shall rest upon my memory. For lonely I sit all the day, and listen to the dashing rain. The keen wind whistles at my gate, and drives away the timid guest. Dark boats pass by on the swift stream, but no pas-

senger lands at my hall. Thou too, O sweet Daughter of the Smile, didst sail by over the blue wave, when the voice * of joy was in the hall of kings. But Therina past the day silent and solitary. When a thousand oaks flamed beyond the stream, she saw the distant blaze, like the red streaks of the setting sun. She heard the murmur of the distant shouts; and at last through the dark air, she saw the approaching torch, that lighted back her friends, from the feast of empty shells. She ran to meet them through the lonely hall: and the wind lifted her cloak.

Will no voice reply to my song? I too have a harp, which the winds sweep with its wings.

* The Coronation in 1760. Miss Talbot then was in the 40th year of her age when she wrote this Imitation. Only specimens of the Poems of Ossian had then been published. Fingal was not printed till 1762, and Temora not till the following year.

IMITATION II.

THERINA AND CARTHONA.

Therina.

DAUGHTER of the song, why is thy look so pensive? Why dost thou regard me with an eye of compassion?

Carthona. Thy melancholy strain pierced my heart. I view thee already as in the narrow house, where all is silence and darkness. I look upon thee as a diamond buried deep in the rock, when it ought to be flaming on an imperial diadem.

Therina. Partial is thine eye, kind Daughter of Harmony, and idly fictitious was my plaintive strain. My expectations look beyond the narrow house, and the view terminates in splendour. Yet I am not a diamond, O Carthona, but a feeble

glow-worm of the earth, whose sickly lustre would go out in open day, and is beheld to advantage, only from being judiciously placed amidst obscurity.

Carthona. Lowly daughter of Indolence, thou dost not well to acquiesce in the meanest, and most useless form of being, who mightest warble on a bough with the songstresses of the grove, or shine on gay wings, with the flutterers of the air.

Therina. I was once a butterfly, O Carthona, and my existence was most despicable. The glow-worm in its low estate, is pleasing to the eye, that approaches it near: is useful sometimes, to direct the steps of the benighted traveller.

Carthona. Daughter of Indolence! Thy discourse is idle and ungrateful.

Therina. Hear then, O Carthona! the reverse of my plaintive strains, and may it sound sweet in thine ears. Thou art pleased with the tale of Malvina, who attended the blind age of Ossian, emphatically blind! Her form rises elegant to thy

mind, and the voice of her praise sounds melodious to thy fancy. Yet what is the fame of Malvina? And what was the merit of Ossian? The threads of my life, O Carthona, though homely, are woven amid others of inestimable tincture. The ties of indissoluble friendship have mingled them among threads of purest gold, the richest purple, and the brighest silver. Such are the durable textures, which heaven has framed in the loom of civilized society: While the scattered threads of Fingal's days are like autumnal cobwebs, tost by winds from thorn to thorn: whence some few of peculiar whiteness are collected by the musing bard, when solitary he roams amid the pathless wild.

IMITATION III.

TRUE Ossian, I delight in songs: harmony sooths my soul. It sooths it O Ossian, but it raises it far above these grassy clods, and rocky hills. It exalts it above the vain phantoms of clouds, the wandering meteors of the night.

Listen in thy turn, thou sad son of Fingal, to the lonely dweller of the rock. Let thy harp rest for a while, and thy thoughts cease to retrace the war and bloodshed, of the days that are past. Sightless art thou O Ossian, and sad is thy failing age. Thine ear is to the hollow blast, and thy expectation is closed in the narrow house. Thy memory is of the deeds of thy fathers, and thy fathers, where are they? What O Ossian, are those deeds of other times? they are horror, and blood, and desolation.

Harp of Ossian be still. Why dost thou sound in the blast, and wake my sleeping fancy? Deep and long has been its repose. Solid are the walls that surround me*. The idle laugh enters not here: why then should the idler tear? Yet Ossian I would weep for thee: I would weep for thee, Malvina.—But my days are as the flight of an arrow. Shall the arrow turn aside from its mark?

Bright was thy genius, Ossian! But darkness was in thy heart: It shrank from the light of heaven. The lonely dweller of the rock sang, in vain, to thy deafened ear. The *Grecian* was not blind like thee. On him the true sun never dawned: yet he sung, though erroneous, of all-ruling Providence, and faintly looked up to the parent of gods and men. Thy vivid fancy O Ossian, what beheld it but a cloudy Fingal? Vain in the pride of an-

* She was then residing in Lambeth Palace; and whoever has seen that noble work *of other times* will allow that the epithet is not misapplied.

cestry, thou remainest by choice an orphan, in an orphan world. Did never the dweller of the rock point out to thy friendless age, a kindred higher than the heaven? A brotherhood wide as the world? A staff to thy failing steps? A light to thy sightless soul? And didst thou reject them, Ossian? What then is genius, but a meteor brightness? The humble, the mild, the simple, the unеloquent, with peaceful steps followed their welcome pastor, into fair meads of everlasting verdure.——While thou sittest gloomy on the storm-beaten hill, and repeating to the angry blast, the boast of human pride: the tales of devastation of war, the deeds of other times. Far other times are these——Ah would they were! For still destruction spreads: still human pride rises with the tygers of the desart, and makes its horrid boast *!

* Consequently this was written before the Peace of 1763. This last imitation is by much the finest. It shows a mind accustomed to think, and to think

upon the best and truest principles; undazzled by the glare and splendor of language, though deeply sensible to its charms. Supposing the Poems of Ossian to be genuine, these Reflections are peculiarly just and affecting.

ALLEGORIES.

ALLEGORY I.

Life compared to a Play.

IF I was not quite sick of the number of stupid dreams, which have been writ in imitation of those excellent ones published in the Spectators, Tatlers, and some later periodical papers, I should be exceedingly tempted to fall into some allegorical slumbers. After this declaration, I know not why I may not actually do it; since I see people in a hundred other instances, seem to imagine that censuring any thing violently, is amply sufficient to excuse their being guilty of it.

Suppose me then composed in my easy chair, after having long meditated on that old and threadbare comparison of human Life to a Play. To this, my imagination furnishes abundance of scenery; and the train of my thoughts go on just as well,

after my eyes are closed, as it did before.

As I have yet but a very inconsiderable part in the performance, I have leisure enough to stand between the scenes, and to amuse myself with various speculations. Fortunately for me, I am placed near a person, who can give me sufficient information of the whole matter; since indeed this venerable person is no other, than the originally intended directress of the theatre, *Wisdom* by name: but being of a temper above entering into all the little disputes of the actors, she has suffered her place to be usurped by a multitude of pretenders, who mix the vilest of farces, and the absurdest of tragedies, with the noblest drama in the world.

These destructive interlopers were busily instructing all the actors, as they appeared upon the stage, and indeed one might easily see the effects of their teaching. Scarce one in fifty repeated a single line with a natural and unaffected air. Every feature was distorted by grimace: many

a good sentiment *outrée*, by the emphasis with which it was pronounced.

Would it not put one quite out of patience, said my neighbour, to see that fellow there, so entirely spoil one of the finest passages in the play, by turning it into a mere rant? Is there any bearing that man, who pretending to act the lover, puts on all the airs of a madman? Why Sir, do you think that graceful figure, that sense, and all those advantages you were drest with, in order to do honour to my company, were given you, only that you might walk about the stage, sighing and exclaiming? Pray let me cast an eye upon your part.—Look ye, are here any of those soliloquies that you are every moment putting in?—Why, here is not a single word of misery, death, torment.—The lover waking out of his reverie, pointed to a prompter that stood at a little distance, when *Wisdom* perceived it to be busy *Imagination*. She only, with an air of compassion, drew the poor youth to her side

of the stage, and begged he would keep out of the hearing of so bad a director.

The next, we happened to attend to, was a young woman, of a most amiable figure, who stood pretty near us, but the good-nature in her countenance was mixed with a kind of haughty disdain, whenever she turned towards *Imagination*, that did not absolutely please me. I remarked upon it to my friend, and we jointly observed her stealing leisure from her part, to look over the whole scheme of the Drama. That actress, says she, has a most charming genius, but she too has a *Travers* in it. Because she has seen some love scenes, in the play, ridiculously acted, and heard them censured by those, whose judgment she respects, and especially because she is very justly displeased with all the bombast stuff, *Imagination* puts into them, she will, against her senses believe, there is scarce a single line about it, in the whole Drama: and there you may see her striking out for spurious, passages that

have warmed the noblest hearts with generous sentiments, and gained a just applause from Socrates and Plato themselves: two of the finest actors I ever had. This is, however, an error on the right side. Happy for you, young actress, if you never fall into a worse. She may indeed miss saying an agreeable thing, but she never will say an absurd one.

Look yonder, and you will see more dangerous, and more ridiculous mistakes. That group of young actors, just entering on the stage, who cannot possibly have beheld more than half a scene, pretend already in a decisive way, to give their judgment of the whole. They do not so much as wait for their cue, (which years and discretion ought to give them) but thrust forward into the very middle of the action. Some of them, displeased with the decorations of their part of the theatre, are busied in hurrying the tinsel ornaments, from the other corners of it, where they were much more becomingly placed. That man yonder, who ought to be acting the

part of a hero, is so taken up with adjusting his dress, and that of his companions, that he never once seems to think of the green-room, where all these robes must soon be laid aside.

Look yonder, look yonder! This is a pitiable sight indeed. Behold that woman exquisitely handsome still, though much past the bloom of youth, and formed to shine in any part, but so unhappily attached to that she has just left, that her head is absolutely turned behind her: so unwilling is she to lose sight of her beloved gaieties.

In another place you may see persons, who, sensible that the splendid dresses of the threatre are only lent them, for a time, disdain, with a sullen ill-judged pride, to put them on at all, and so disgrace the parts that were allotted them for their own advantage.

Alas! what a different prompter has that actor got! He was designed to represent a character of generosity, and, for that purpose, furnished with a large trea-

sure of counters, which it was his business to dispose of in the most graceful manner, to those actors engaged in the same scene with him. Instead of this, that old fellow, *Interest*, who stands at his elbow, has prompted him to put the whole bag into his pocket, as if the counters themselves were of real value: whereas the moment he sets his foot off the stage, or is hurried down, through some of those trap-doors, that are every moment opening round him, these tinsel pieces are no longer current. To conceal, in some measure, the falseness of this behaviour, he is forced to leave out a hundred fine passages, intended to grace his character, and to occasion unnumbered chasms, and inconsistencies, which not only make him hissed, but the very scheme of the Drama murmured at. Yet still he persists: and see! just now, when he ought to be gracefully treading the stage with a superior air; he is stooping down to pick up some more counters that happen to be fallen upon the dirty floor, made dirty

on purpose for the disgrace of those who chuse to grovel there.

You can scarce have an idea, added my instructress, how infinitely the harmony of the whole piece is interrupted, by the misuse which these wrong-headed actors make of its mere decorations. The part you have to act, child, is a very small one. But remember, it is infinitely superior to every such attachment. Fix your attention upon its meaning; not its ornaments. Let your manner be just, and unaffected; your air cheerful and disengaged. Never pretend to look beyond the present page: and above all, trust the great Author of the Drama, with his own glorious work: and never think to mend what is above your understanding, by minute criticisms, that are below it.

ALLEGORY II.

The Danger of Indulgence of the Imagination.

METHOUGHT as I was sitting at work, a young woman came into the room, clothed in a loose green garment. Her long hair fell in ringlets upon her shoulders: her head was crowned with roses and myrtles. A prodigious sweetness appeared in her countenance, and notwithstanding the irregularity of her features, and a certain wildness in her eyes, she seemed to me the most agreeable person I had ever beheld.

When she was entered, she presented me with a little green brnach, upon which was a small sort of nut enclosed in a hard black shell, which she said was both wholesome and delicious, and bid me follow her,

and not be afraid, for she was going to make me happy.

I did as she commanded me, and immediately a chariot descended and took us up. It was made of the richest materials, and drawn by four milk-white turtles. Whilst we were hurried with a rapid motion, over vast oceans, boundless plains, and barren desarts, she told me, that her name was *Imagination;* that she was carrying me to Parnassus, where she herself lived.

I had scarce time to thank her before we arrived at the top of a very high mountain, covered with very thick woods. Here we alighted; and my guide taking me by the hand, we passed through several beautiful groves of myrtle, bays, and laurel, separated from one another by little green alleys, enamelled with the finest flowers. Nothing was to be heard but the rustling of leaves, the humming of bees, the warbling of birds, and the purling of streams: and in short, this spot seemed to be a Paradise.

After wandering some time in this delightful place, we came to a long grass-walk; at the further end of which, in a bower of jassamins and woodbines, strewed with flowers, sat a woman of a middle age, but of a pleasing countenance. Her hair was finely braided: and she wore a habit of changeable silk.

When we approached her she was weaving nets of the finest silk, which she immediately threw down, and embraced me. I was surprized at so much civility from a stranger; which she perceiving, bid me not wonder at the kindness she showed for me, at first sight, since, besides my being in the company of that lady, (pointing to *Imagination*) which was recommendation enough, my own person would entitle me to the favour of all who saw me: but, added she, you have had a long walk, and want rest; come and sit down in my bower.

Though this offer would, at another time, have been very acceptable to me, yet so great was my desire of seeing the

Muses, that I begged to be excused, and to have permission to pursue my journey. Being informed by *Imagination* where we were going, she commended my laudable curiosity, and said, she would accompany us. As we went along, she told me her name was *Good-Will*, and that she was a great friend to the Muses, and to the lady who brought me hither, whom she had brought up from a child: and had saved her from being carried away by *Severity* and *Ill-Humour*, her inveterate enemies.

When she had done speaking, we arrived at the happy place I had so much wished to see. It was a little circular opening, at the upper end of which sat, on a throne of the most fragrant flowers, a young man in a flame-coloured garment, of a noble, but haughty countenance. He was crowned with laurel, and held a harp in his hand. Round him sat nine beautiful young women, who all played upon musical instruments. These, *Imagination* told me, were *Apollo* and the *Muses*. But above all the rest, there were three that I most

admired, and who seemed fondest of me.

One of these was clothed in a loose and careless manner; she was reposed on a bank of flowers, and sung with a sweeter voice than any of the others. The garment of the second was put on with the greatest care and exactness, and richly embroidered with the gayest colours, but it did not seem to fit her. But it was the third whom I most admired. She was crowned with roses and a variety of other flowers. She played upon all the instruments, and never staid five minutes in a place.

Just as I was going to sit down to a fine repast, which they had prepared for me of the fruits of the mountain, we saw two grave-looking men advancing towards us. Immediately *Imagination* shrieked out, and *Good-Will* said she had great reason, for those were *Severity* and *Ill-Humour*, who had like to have run away with her when but a child, as she had told me before. You too, added she, may be in

danger, therefore come into the midst of us.

I did so: and by this time the two men were come up. One of them was completely armed, and held a mirror in his hand. The other wore a long robe, and held, in one hand, a mariner's compass, and in the other, a lanthorn. They soon pierced to the centre of our little troop: and the first, with much ado, at length forced me from the only two, who still held out against them, and made me hearken to the other, who bid me not be afraid, and told me, though I might be prejudiced against him and his companion, by those I had lately been with, yet they had a greater desire of my happiness, and would do more towards it. But, said he, if you have eat any of that fruit, which you have in your hand, of which the real name is *Obstinacy*, all I can say will be ineffectual.

I assured him, I had not tasted this fatal fruit. He said he was very glad of it, and bid me throw it down and follow

him, which I did, till by a shorter way, we came to the brow of the mountain. When we were there, he told me, the only way to deliver myself from the danger I was then in, was to leap down into the plain below. As the mountain seemed very steep, and the plain very barren, I could neither persuade myself to obey, nor had I courage to disobey him.

I thus stood wavering for some time, till the man in armour pushed me down, as Mentor did Telemachus. When I was recovered from the first shock of my fall, how great was my surprize to find this paradise of the world, this delightful mountain, was raised to that prodigious height, by mere empty clouds.

After they had given me some time to wonder, he, who held the lanthorn in his hand, told me that the place before me was the Mount of *Folly*. That *Imagination* was *Romance*, *Good-Will* was *Flattery*, *Apollo* was *Bombast*. That the two false Muses who tried most to keep me from coming with them, were *Self-Conceit*

and *Idleness*: that the others were *Inconstancy*, *False-Taste*, *Ignorance*, and *Affectation* her daughter, *Enthusiam* of Poetry, *Credulity* a great promoter of their despotic dominion, and *Fantasticalness*, who took as many hearts as any of the rest.

I thanked him for this information, and told him, that it would almost equal the joy of my deliverance, to know the names of my deliverers. He told me his own was *Good-Advice*, and his companion's *Good-Sense* his brother, and born at the same time. He added, that if I liked their company, they would, after having shewn me the many thousand wretches, whom my false friends had betrayed, conduct me to the abode of *Application* and *Perseverance*, the parents of all the virtues.

I told him that nothing could afford me a more sensible pleasure. Then, said he, prepare yourself for a scene of horror: and immediately, with the help of his brother, he lifted up the mountain, and discovered to my sight a dark and hollow vale, where under the shade of cypress and yew, lay

in the utmost misery, multitudes of unhappy mortals, mostly young women, run away with by *Romance*. When I had left this dreadful spot, and the mountain was closed upon them, just as I was going to be good and happy, some unhappy accident awakened me.

POETRY.

БОЙЛВА.

POETRY.

AWAKE my Laura, break the silken chain,
Awake my Friend, to hours unsoil'd by pain:
Awake to peaceful joys and thought refin'd,
Youth's cheerful morn, and Virtue's vigorous mind:
Wake to all joys, fair friendship can bestow,
All that from health, and prosp'rous fortune flow.
Still dost thou sleep? awake, imprudent fair,
Few hours has life, and few of those can spare *.

Forsake thy drowsy couch, and sprightly rise
While yet fresh morning streaks the ruddy skies:
While yet the birds their early mattins sing,
And all around us blooming as the spring.
Ere sultry Phœbus with his scorching ray
Has drank the dew-drops from their mansion gay,
Scorch'd ev'ry flow'r, embrown'd each drooping green,
Pall'd the pure air, and chas'd the pleasing scene.
Still dost thou sleep? O rise, imprudent fair,
Few hours has life, nor of those few can spare.

* For is there aught in sleep can charm the wise?
To lie in dull oblivion, losing half
The fleeting moments of too short a life!

Thomson's Summer.

But this, perhaps, was but a summer song,
And winter nights are dark, and cold and long:
Weak reason that, for sleeping past the morn
Yet urg'd by sloth, and by indulgence born.
Oh rather haste to rise, my slumb'ring friend,
While feeble suns their scanty influence lend;
While cheerful day-light yet adorns the skies,
Awake, my Friend! my Laura haste to rise.
For soon the uncertain short-liv'd day shall fail,
And soon shall night extend her sooty veil*:
Blank nature fades, black shades and phantoms drear
Haunt the sick eye, and fill the court of fear.
O therefore sleep no more, imprudent fair,
Few hours has day, few days the circling year,
Few years has life, and few of these can spare.

Think of the task those hours have yet in view,
Reason to arm, and passion to subdue;
While life's fair calm, and flatt'ring moments last,
To fence your mind against the stormy blast:
Early to hoard blest Wisdom's peace-fraught store,
Ere yet your bark forsakes the friendly shore,
And the winds whistle, and the billows roar.
Imperfect beings! weakly arm'd to bear
Pleasure's soft wiles, or sorrow's open war:
Alternate shocks from diff'rent sides to feel,
Now to subdue the heart, and now to steel:

* "The night cometh when no man can work." John ix. 4.

Yet fram'd with high aspirings, strong desires,
How mad th' attempt to quench celestial fires!
Still to perfection tends the restless mind,
And happiness its bright reward assign'd.
And shall dull sloth obscure the Heav'n beam'd ray
That guides our passage to the realms of day,
Cheers the faint heart, and points the dubious way!
Not weakly arm'd, if ever on our guard,
Nor to the worst unequal if prepar'd:
Not unsurmountable the task, if lov'd,
Nor short the time, if ev'ry hour improv'd.
O rouse thee then, nor shun the glorious strife,
Extend, improve, enjoy thy hours of life:
Assert thy reason, animate thy heart,
And act thro' life's short scene the useful part:
Then sleep in peace, by gentlest mem'ry crown'd,
Till time's vast year hast fill'd its perfect round.

ON READING THE LOVE ELEGIES, 1742 *.

HITHER your wreaths, ye drooping Muses, bring
  The short-lived rose †, that blooms but to decay;
Love's fragrant myrtles, that in Paphos spring,
  And deathless Poetry's immortal bay.

And oh thou gentlest shade accept the verse,
  Mean tho' it be, and artlessly sincere,
That pensive thus attends thy silent hearse,
  And steals, in secret shades, the pious tear.

What heart, by Heav'n with gen'rous softness blest,
  But in thy Lines its native language reads?
Where hapless Love, in classic plainness drest,
  Gracefully mourns, and elegantly bleeds.

In vain, alas, thy fancy fondly gay
  Trac'd the fair scenes of dear domestic life,
The sportive Loves forsook their wanton play,
  To paint for thee the Mistress, Friend and Wife.

* These Lines were written after reading Hammond's Elegies in M. S. a year before they were published. See his Life prefixed to Foulis' edition, fol. 1787, in which these Lines are printed. Miss Talbot was then only 22 years of age. Later in life she would probably have admired them less.

† ——— nimium breves
Flores amænæ ferre jube rosæ. Hor. II. Ode 3.

One caught from Delia's lips the winning smile,
  One from her eyes his little soul inspir'd;
Then seiz'd thy pen, and smooth'd thy flowing style,
  Then wept, and trembled, and with sobs admir'd,

O luckless Lover! form'd for better days,
  For golden years, and ages long ago,
For Thee Persephone impatient stays *,
  For Thee the willow and the cypress grow.

* Oh spare, Persephone, this guiltless head.
HAMMOND, Eleg. IV.

WRIT ON NEW-YEAR'S-EVE, WHILE THE BELLS WERE RINGING OUT THE OLD YEAR.

I.

AGAIN the smoothly circling year,
Beneath fair skies serene and clear,
Completes its gentle round;
Sweet bells in tuneful sounds express
Gay thanks for rural happiness,
And months with plenty crown'd.

II.

While yet remains the courteous guest,
O be my greatful thoughts exprest
Unmixed with grief or fear.
Farewel ye seasons! roll away,
I wish not to prolong your stay,
Tho' age brings up the rear.

III.

Cheerful I trust, for future good,
The hand which all the past bestow'd,
Nor heed life's shifting scene.
Farewel kind year, which still hast blest
My days with peace, my nights with rest,
And leav'st my mine serene.

IV.

Not yet—but now impends the stroke,
The far resounding midnight clock
Has summon'd thee away;
Go mingle with the countless past,
Till time himself has liv'd his last,
In soft oblivion stay.

V.

But then with smiling grace appear,
Thou blameless, grief-unsullied year,
O smile once more on me,
And witness that thy golden hours
Have all been priz'd, as summer flow'rs
By some industrious bee.

TO CHEERFULNESS.

FAIR *Cheerfulness*, nymph who all nymphs dost excel,
Ah tell me sweet *Cheerfulness*, where dost thou dwell?
I would search the world round, thee dear charmer to find,
And with thy rosy chaplet my forehead to bind.

II.

When with thee, shall I drink of the clear crystal spring,
While birds on the branches rejoicingly sing?
When, with thee, on the sun-shiny hills shall I play?
When all nature around us, looks flowry and gay?

III.

Oh why have I lost thee? What heedless offence,
Delightful companion, has banish'd thee hence?
This heart, still thy own, has admitted no guest
By whom thou, dearest charmer, should be dispossest.

IV.

Thou ever wert known with *Religion* to dwell,
And gild with thy smiles her contemplative cell:
With *Innocence* thou trippest light o'er the green,
While the blue sky above shines all clear and serene.

V.

With *Philosophy* oft thy gay moments were past,
When Socrates heighten'd the pleasing repast,
With *Industry* ever thou lovest to go,
Tho' she carry the milk-pail, or follow the plough

VI.

Far away from my bosom I banish'd thy foes,
Nor admitted one thought that could hurt thy repose;
Unresting *Ambition*, wild *Passion's* excess;
Anxiety vain, and *romantic Distress*.

VII.

Indeed giddy *Mirth*, and her frolicksome crew
But little, if ever, thy Rosalind knew:
Yet my solitude often by thee has been blest,
My days thou hast brighten'd, and sweeten'd my rest.

VIII.

Why then art thou gone? oh inconstant as fair,
Art thou only a tenant of Summer's soft air?
Full well did I hope thy perpetual ray,
Should gild with mild lustre, life's most gloomy day.

IX.

Sweet songstress dost thou with sad Philomel fly,
To seek in new climes a more temperate sky?
While the Red-breast all Winter continues to sing,
And gladdens its snows with the music of Spring.

X.

Thou shouldst be, thro' life my companion and guide,
Come sickness, come sorrow, whatever betide:
Gift of heav'n to shorten our wearisome way,
Thro' the valley of toil, to the regions of day.

XI.

But methinks, in my heart still, (I hear thee reply)
I cherish one guest, who constrains thee to fly;
Grey *Memory* famous, like Nestor of old,
For honied discourses, and stories twice told*.

XII.

Old *Memory* often will dwell on a tale,
That makes the fresh rose in thy garland grow pale:
Yet what can he tell, that may justly displease
Thee, whose cloud-piercing eye all futurity sees?

XIII.

He speaks but what gratitude dictates, and truth,
Recals the gay moments of friendship and youth:
He tells of past pleasures securely our own,
And so much of our journey how happily gone.

* ——————— ειρημενα μυθολογευειν. Hom. Od. xii.

Human nature has in all ages been the same; and this has been the complaint of youth against age, and of cheerfulness against melancholy, from the earliest times.

XIV.

Thou knowest, fair charmer of lineage divine,
That soon the clear azure unclouded shall shine:
That life's transient blessings the earnest but give
Of such as from time shall no limits receive.

XV.

Oh come then, dear source of good-humour and ease,
Who teachest at once to be pleas'd and to please;
And ever henceforth, with thy Rosalind dwell,
Sweet *Cheerfulness*, nymph, who all nymphs dost excel.

MORAL STANZAS.

I.

WELCOME the real state of things
Ideal world adieu,
Where clouds pil'd up by fancy's hand
Hang lou'ring o'er each view.

II.

Here the gay sunshine of content
Shall gild each humble scene:
And life steal on with gentle pace,
Beneath a sky serene.

III.

Hesperian trees amidst my grove
I ask not to behold,
Since ev'n from Ovid's song I know,
That dragons guard the gold.

IV.

Nor would I have the phœnix build
In my poor elms his nest,
For where shall odorous gums be found
To treat the beauteous guest?

V.

Henceforth no pleasure I desire
In any wild extreme,
Such as should lull the captiv'd mind
In a bewitching dream.

VI.

Friendship I ask, without caprice,
When faults are over-seen:
Errors on both sides mix'd with truth
And kind good-will between.

VII.

Health, that may best its value prove,
By slight returns of pain:
Amusements to enliven life,
Crosses to prove it vain.

VIII.

Thus would I pass my hours away,
Extracting good from all:
Till time shall from my sliding feet
Push this uncertain ball.

LINES,

WRIT IN THE COUNTRY TOWARDS THE END OF AUTUMN.

SPRING, gay season, is no more,
Summer's golden reign is o'er.
Soon to close the varied year,
Hoary Winter shall appear.
When the northern tempests blow,
When the hills are hid in snow,
Where shall drooping fancy find
Scenes to soothe a rural mind?

When the busy world resort
To the gay, the festive court,
Say, within the lonely cell,
How shall sweet contentment dwell?
Shall not then the tedious day
Sad and silent wear away?
Shall not all the darksome night
Fondly dream of vain delight?

Shining scenes shall vex the mind
To delusive sleep resign'd,
Chas'd by chirping birds away,
At the chilly dawn of day.

Then to turn the studious page
Shall the morning hours engage:
When the lamps at evening burn,
Still the studious page to turn.

Or intent with hand and eye
The laborious loom to ply,
There a mimic spring to raise,
Vain persuit of trifling praise.
Hence will fancy often stray
To the circles of the gay,
—Shall she not?—then prithee bind
In thy chains the veering mind.

As it lists the wind may blow,
Fancy *shall* her ruler know,
Idle being, shadowy queen,
Empress of a fairy scene.
Summer spring and autumn past,
Welcome winter comes at last,
Winter comes, with sober cheer,
Winding up the varied year.

When the verdant scenes are lost,
When the hills are white with frost,
Fancy's idle reign is done,
Reason's empire is begun.
Happy, gay ones, may you be
All your hours from sorrow free,
To the happy, to the gay,
Unreprov'd my thoughts shall stray.

Pleasant is it to behold
Distant mountains tipp'd with gold,
Sunny landscapes round us spread,
While our path is in the shade.
  Welcome Morpheus, with thy train,
  Pleasing phantoms of the brain:
  Welcome Sol's returning ray,
  Chirping birds and dawning day.

Welcome then the sacred lore,
Peaceful wisdom's endless store;
Hours inestimable dear,
Welcome happiest of the year!
  Then the pencil, then the loom,
  Welcome ev'ry mimic bloom.
  Health, and industry, and peace,
  —Muse enough, thy labour cease.

CONTENTS.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SEVEN DAYS OF THE WEEK.

		Page
On Sunday.	THE Omnipresence of God, and the Practical Inferences from it - - -	1
Monday.	The Improvement of Time, and Self-Examination -	6
Tuesday.	The Duty of constant Employment - - -	14
Wednesday.	On the humble and religious Enjoyment of the Blessings of Life - - - -	20
Thursday.	The Duty and Manner of being Useful in Society - -	28
Friday.	On the Happiness of the present State, and the Self-Denial required in it - -	37
Saturday.	The Importance of Time in relation to Eternity - -	50

ESSAYS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

Essay		Page
I.	On the Employment of Time in the different Situations in Society - -	59
II.	On true Politeness - - -	70
III.	On the Accommodation of the Temper to Circumstances - - -	83
IV.	On Delicacy of Feeling - -	93
V.	On the Employment of Wealth - -	101
VI.	On the Importance of Riches - -	111
VII.	On Literary Composition - -	119
VIII.	On Prior's Henry and Emma - -	125
IX.	On the Separation of Friends by Death	135
X.	On Self-Love - - -	142
XI.	On the Principle of Self-Interest as applied to Education - -	150
XII.	On the Distinction between Cunning and Prudence - - - -	158
XIII.	On the Necessity of encouraging Hope	166
XIV.	On the Moral Uses of Geography -	172
XV.	On Consistency of Character - -	180
XVI.	On the Art of Pleasing in Society -	187
XVII.	On the Power and Necessity of Confidence - - -	194
XVIII.	On true Friendship - -	200
XIX.	On our Passage through Life; a Reverie	206
XX.	On our Capacity for Pleasure -	216
XXI.	On Reflexion as the Source of Cheerfulness - -	224
XXII.	On the Employments of Life - -	229
XXIII.	On Resignation to the Will of Providence	234

ESSAY Page
XXIV. On the Happiness derived from Society 238
XXV. On Trust in Providence - - 246
XXVI. On the Necessity of Innocent Amusement - - - - - 252

LETTERS TO A FRIEND ON A FUTURE STATE, IN THE CHARACTER OF A GUARDIAN ANGEL.

LETTER
I. - - - - - 259
II. - - - - - 263
III. - - - - - 268

DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUE
I. Description of a moral but not gloomy Retirement - - - 275
II. Enquiry how far Practice has kept pace with Intention - - - 279
III. Danger of too much Prosperity without the Assistance of real Friends - - 287
IV. Of the Danger and insinuating Nature of Vanity - - - 291
V. On the Nature of Human Happiness - 304

OCCASIONAL THOUGHTS - - 313

PROSE PASTORALS.

PASTORAL
I. Enquiry into the Happiness or Misery of a Shepherd's Life - - 321

PASTORAL Page
II. On the Comforts of virtuous Poverty - 329
III. The Happiness of religious Hope - - 335
A FAIRY TALE.—Education - - - 341

IMITATIONS OF OSSIAN.

IMITATION
I. - - - - - 375
II. - - - - - 377
III. - - - - - 380

ALLEGORIES.

ALLEGORY
I. Life compared to a Play - - - 387
II. The Danger of indulging the Imagination - 395

POETRY.

To Laura - - - - 407
On reading the Love Elegies, 1742 - - 410
Written on New Year's Eve while the Bells were ringing out the Old Year - - 412
To Cheerfulness - - - 414
Moral Stanzas - - - 418
Lines written in the Country towards the end of Autumn - - - 420
Elegy - - - - 423
Ode - - - - 425

ELEGY *.

O Form'd for boundless bliss! Immortal soul,
Why dost thou prompt the melancholy sigh
While evening shades disclose the glowing pole,
And silver moon-beams tremble o'er the sky.

These glowing stars shall fade, this moon shall fall,
This transitory sky shall melt away,
Whilst thou triumphantly surviving all
Shalt glad expatiate in eternal day.

Sickens the mind with longings vainly great,
To trace mysterious wisdom's secret ways,
While chain'd and bound in this ignoble state,
Humbly it breaths sincere, imperfect praise?

Or glows the beating heart with sacred fires,
And longs to mingle in the worlds of love?
Or, foolish trembler, feeds its fond desires
Of earthly good? or dreads life's ills to prove?

* In this Elegy, of which the date is uncertain, the train of thought seems very similar to that which Mrs. Carter addressed to Miss Sutton in 1763. There is also some kind of general resemblance in them both (though on a subject much more sublime) to the opening of Shenstone's xxth Elegy; "why droops this heart," &c.

Back does it trace the flight of former years,
  The friends lamented, and the pleasures past?
Or wing'd with forecast vain, and impious fears,
  Presumptuous to the cloud hid future haste;

Hence, far begone, ye fancy-folded pains,
  Peace, trembling heart, be ev'ry sigh suppress:
Wisdom supreme, eternal goodness reigns,
  Thus far is sure: to Heav'n resign the rest*.

* Thus far was right; the rest belongs to Heaven. POPE.
Prol. to the Sat.

ODE.

WHAT art thou, Memory of former days,
That dost so subtly touch the feeling heart?
Thou know'st such pleasing sadness to impart,
That dost such thrilling dear ideas raise?
Each wonted path, each once familiar place,
Each object, that at first but common seem'd,
Beheld again some sacredness has gain'd,
With fancy's hues inexplicably strain'd,
And by Remembrance venerable deem'd.
Nor idle workings these of fancy fond,
Some solemn truth the Heav'n-sent visions teach,
Stretching our thoughts these bounded scenes beyond,
And this their voice, and this the truth they teach.
Time past to man should be an awful theme,
No magic can the fugitive recall;
If idly lost in pleasure's noon-day dream,
Or vainly wasted, passion's wretched thrall.
Know, thou Profuse? that portion was thy all,
That narrow Pittance of some scanty years,
Was giv'n thee, O unthinking fool! to buy
The priceless Treasures of eternity.
Hence fond remembrance prompts unbidden tears,
And something sadly solemn mingles still,

With ev'ry thought of time for ever gone,
Distinct from past events of good or ill,
Or view of Life's swift changes hastening on.
The sadness hence: but hence the sweetness too;
For well-spent time soft whispers to the mind
Hopes of a blest eternity behind,
That ev'ry happy moment shall renew.
Now pleasing Fancy lend thy endless clue,
And thro' the maze of bliss our path-way guide
Where bloom unfading joys on ev'ry side,
And each gay winding offers to the view,
Here, boundless prospects opening to the sight,
In full celestial glory dazzling bright,
Increasing still, and ever to increase:
There, the soft scenes of innocence and peace.
Thro' which, in early youth, or riper age,
A hand all gracious leads the virtuous few,
That graceful tread on Life's important stage,
But fairer now and brighter ev'ry hue:
For stormy clouds too often intervene,
And throw dark shadows o'er this mortal scene,
Blast the fair buds of hope, or snatch from sight
The dear companions of our social way,
Absorb'd at once in death's impervious night.
Lost for awhile—but when eternal day
Shall gladsome dawn at once its glorious ray,
Shows the fair scene of happiness complete *:
Then Friends, Companions, Lovers joyful meet
Thence never more to part: and fully blown

* See the same delightful idea, but expressed in different words, in Mrs. Carter's Poem to———. P. 85, Vol. II. 8vo, edit. Stanza 7.

The buds of hope their lasting bloom display,
Then sweet *Remembrance* wakes without regret,
And back each human path they fondly trace,
That led thro' steady Wisdom's peaceful ways,
Thro' the still vale of dear domestic life* :
Or thro' the toils of virtue's arduous strife,
To this blest Paradise, this beamy crown,
This cloudless day, whose sun shall never set.

* Secretum iter, et fallentis semita vitæ. HOR. LIB. EPIST. 18.

FINIS.

Printed by Law and Gilbert, St. John's Square, London.

Lately published,

BY F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON,

NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

A SERIES of LETTERS between Mrs. ELIZABETH CARTER and Miss CATHARINE TALBOT, from the Year 1741 to 1770. To which are added, LETTERS from Mrs. ELIZABETH CARTER to Mrs. VESEY, between the Years 1763 and 1787; which Mrs. Vesey earnestly requested should be published.

Published from the original Manuscripts,

By the Rev. MONTAGU PENNINGTON, M. A.

Handsomely printed on a fine woven Paper, in two Volumes Quarto, price in boards 3l. 3s.

MEMOIRS of the LIFE of Mrs. ELIZABETH CARTER, with a New Edition of her POEMS, including some which have never appeared before; to which are added some Miscellaneous Essays in Prose, together with her Notes on the Bible, and Answers to Objections concerning the Christian Religion.

By the Rev. MONTAGU PENNINGTON, M. A.

Vicar of Northbourn, in Kent, her Nephew and Executor.

The Second Edition, handsomely printed in two Volumes Octavo, Price in Boards 18s. A few Copies remain of the Quarto Edition, Price in Boards 2l. 2s.

Mrs. CARTER'S Translation of the Works of Epictetus, from the original Greek. A New Edition, in two Volumes Octavo, Price in Boards 16s. A few Copies remain of the Quarto Edition; Price in Boards 1l. 11s. 6d.